

Dr M and Chuan discuss ways to boost

# Getting private

# sector to lead

Malaysia-Thai co-operation

## From Balan Moses

BANGKOK, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Thai Premier Chuan Leekpai today agreed to spur the private sector in the two countries towards joint economic programmes aimed at optimising the use of their resources.

The Prime Minister said he shared Chuan's sentiments that the private sector was the ideal vehicle for economic co-operation between the two countries.

They concurred that their respective governments would encourage their private sectors to study the potential for joint projects in the wake of the initiation of the Indonesian-Malaysian-Thailand growth triangle programme.

The leaders discussed these issues and others affecting bilateral and multilateral ties at a one-and-a-half-hour meeting of senior officials from both nations at Government House here.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in briefing the Press on issues discussed, said the two Prime Ministers also agreed that bilateral ties should extend beyond economics to encompass fields like transportation, science and technology, education and agriculture.

Dr Mahathir and Chuan also led discussions on the issue of encroachment by fishermen in territorial waters and problems arising from border demarcation activities.

"They agreed to allow these issues to be settled by the respective authorities dealing with them in both countries," Abdullah said.

Dr Mahathir, in touching on regional issues, said Malaysia's decision to replace its ageing fighter aircraft with more sophisticated

planes did not mean it was involved in the arms race.

"Dr Mahathir impressed on the Thai delegation that it was time to replace the fighter aircraft and that it was possible because of Malaysia's better financial standing following good economic growth."

The two leaders also discussed China's decision to strengthen its armed forces with more sophisticated equipment.

Dr Mahathir assured the Thai leaders that Malaysia and Thailand had nothing to fear from China which was only re-equipping its armed forces.

On the Bosnian issue, Abdullah said Asean's unequivocal stand that the United States and European nations take effective action to prevent further bloodshed showed unity of purpose among countries in the region.

Dr Mahathir, in thanking Thailand for supporting Malaysia's position in the matter, said it was another indication of the close bilateral ties between both nations.

The Prime Minister also expressed his views on the East Asia Economic Caucus, noting that South Korea and the United States were taking a new look at the concept following initial opposition.

Dr Mahathir was accorded a red carpet welcome at Government House this morning on his arrival for a four-day visit.

The Prime Minister was met on arrival at the Royal Thai Air Force base near the Don Muang International Airport by the Thai Minister-in-Attendance Chinawoot Soonthornsima who is also a Minister in the Prime Minister's office.

At Government House, Dr Mahathir took the salute as an Armed Forces band played the *Negaraku* and the Thai national anthem.

Chuan then introduced senior Thai Cabinet Ministers to Dr Mahathir who reciprocated the gesture with senior members of the Malaysian delegation.

The Malaysian delegation includes Abdullah, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabharuddin Chik, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Osman Aroff, Penang Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib

and Langkawi Development Authority chairman Tun Daim Zainuddin.

Also in the delegation are senior government officials and 30 prominent businessmen led by YTL Corporation Berhad managing director Datuk Francis Yeoh Siok Ping.

This afternoon, Dr Mahathir attended a briefing on economic development at the National Economic

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and Social Development Board which is responsible for Thailand's seven-year development plan.

Tonight, the Prime Minister attended a State banquet hosted by Chuan at Government House.

Tomorrow, Dr Mahathir will visit the Thai Engineering Product Co Ltd in Nawanakorn and the Thai International Die-making Co Ltd and then Sang Char-

oen Foundry at the Bangpoo Industrial Estate in Samut Prakorn. The factories manufacture parts for the automobile industry.

He will later attend a cocktail reception hosted by the Joint Standing Committee of Commerce, Industry and Banking, followed by a dinner at the Sala Rim Naam restaurant on the banks of the Chao Phraya river.

On Saturday, Dr Mahathir will make a farewell call on Chuan before proceeding to the southern island resort of Koh Samui where he will be briefed on tourism development.

The Prime Minister will leave for Kuala Lumpur on Sunday from the Surat Thani Airport.

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