

Leaders discuss ways to further improve

Dr M, Mitterrand

bilateral relations

hold talks

From Zainon Ahmad

PARIS, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad met President Francois Mitterrand at the Elysee Palace shortly after his arrival today for a four-day official visit to France.

Dr Mahathir, who was in Bosnia last week, exchanged views with Mitterrand on the situation in the war-torn country. It was one of the international issues the two leaders discussed during the meeting.

On bilateral relations, the two leaders — who assumed their present positions in 1981 — discussed means to further improve cordial ties between their countries.

Accompanying the Prime Minister during the courtesy call were Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Ambassador Datuk Mahayuddin Abdul Rahman.

This is Dr Mahathir's second official visit to France. His first was in 1984.

Dr Mahathir heads a delegation of 28 senior government officials and 33 businessmen led by Malaysian Chamber of Commerce president Tan Sri Wan Azmi Hamzah, for the visit described as "a full working trip."

Also in the delegation are Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar and Deputy International Trade and In-

dustry Minister Chua Jui Meng.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, was received by Civil Service Minister Andre Rossinot and senior French and Malaysian Government officials at Le Bourget Airport.

After inspecting a guard of honour, he and his party were driven off in a motorcade to Hotel de Crillon at Place de la Concorde where he is staying.

Tomorrow he will meet top French industrialists and investors, private sector representatives and the French National Committee of Employers at the Conseil National Du Patronat Francais (CNPF).

There is also a working luncheon between his delegation and the French side headed by Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

In the evening he will witness the signing of several agreements between Malaysia and France at the Foreign Ministry before attending a dinner hosted by Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

On Friday and Saturday, Dr Mahathir and his party will tour a number of aeronautical plants, including the Airbus Industrie factory to see the first of the 10 A330-300 aircraft ordered by Malaysia Airlines.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to take a look at a light rail transport system and witness the launching of the first of two LNG tankers built by Chantiers De L'Atlantique at Saint Nazaire.