

29 SEP 1997

Mahathir-Chile

PM ARRIVES IN CHILE ON SECOND LEG OF LATIN AMERICAN VISIT

By: K.C.Leong

SANTIAGO, Sept 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived for a three-day official visit to Chile Sunday evening (Monday morning MST) on the second leg of a four-nation Latin American visit.

The Prime Minister, who arrived here from Cuba, was accompanied by a 100-member official and business delegation, which included Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu and Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa.

He was met on arrival at Arturo Merino Benitez Airport by Chilean Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza and Malaysian ambassador to Chile Lily Zachariah.

Dr Mahathir will be officially welcomed by President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle at the presidential palace when he makes a courtesy call on the Chilean head of state at Palacio de la Moneda Monday morning (Monday night MST).

The call kicks off a hectic day for the prime minister who will lead the Malaysian side in a bilateral meeting before proceeding by train to the nearby town of San Bernardo with President Frei to jointly inaugurate the new railway station there.

In the afternoon, he will attend a business lunch with a select group of top Malaysian and Chilean business leaders.

At night, he will attend a state dinner given in his honour by President Frei at Palacio de la Moneda.

While here, Dr Mahathir will also address the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) at a gala dinner on Tuesday night (Wednesday morning MST). Earlier on Tuesday, he will attend the opening of the 12th PECC meeting by President Frei.

In the afternoon, he will visit Pirque, 45 km south of here, to officiate at the ground-breaking ceremony for a township project which is to be developed by a Malaysian-Chilean joint-venture company.

A local subsidiary of MTD Capital Malaysia Bhd has a 51 per cent stake in El Principal SA which will develop the US\$150 million (about RM450 million) project over the next eight to 10 years.

The prime minister, who is making his second visit to this country, will leave for Uruguay on Wednesday morning (Wednesday night MST) for a two-day visit before proceeding to Argentina.

Dr Mahathir last visited Chile in 1991 while President Frei made a state visit to Malaysia in 1995. -- BERNAMA

LKC RM