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Mahathir-Train

TOWNSHIP PROJECT A SYMBOL OF SUCCESS OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

By: K.C.Leong

SAN BERNARDO, CHILE, Sept 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Chilean President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle today jointly inaugurated a new township project which was held up as a symbol of success of South-South co-operation.

The two leaders had travelled on a new train which they had just jointly inaugurated earlier in Santiago and on a newly completed railway line to this town just outside the Chilean capital.

The project involves the redevelopment of an old railroad depot here into a new township which is expected to prove popular with residents of Santiago seeking to escape the pressures of living in the city of nearly six million.

It is being developed by Malaysia South-South Corporation Berhad (Masscorp), a consortium formed by a number of leading Malaysian companies, and its Chilean partners.

With the completion of a new railway station here and the railway line from Santiago, now a mere 15 minutes ride away in the new train, it was hoped that more city folks would be encouraged to spend their weekends in this picturesque town.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here yesterday (Monday, MST) for a three-day official visit, earlier was given an official welcome at the Altar de la Patria National Monument before calling on President Frei at the nearby Palacio de la Moneda.

At the presidential palace, the two leaders had a brief meeting before leading their respective delegations to a bilateral meeting. They then departed for Santiago's central railway station to travel here.

Addressing a large crowd of San Bernardo folks and municipality officials, Dr Mahathir said the project marked a new milestone in Malaysia-Chile relations and represented the culmination of months of planning and hard work by all the partners.

He said the project provided a reminder that countries of the South had much to offer one another. "Projects of this nature prove yet again that South-South co-operation is working effectively for the betterment of its people," he added.

It also demonstrated that the corporate sector of the South was more than capable of undertaking large construction projects that ultimately would benefit all sectors of the community, the prime minister said.

He was also pleased that in the efforts to develop the township, care had been taken to safeguard the environment and efforts had been made to incorporate recreational facilities for the young and old.

He hoped the project would contribute towards making the vision of the municipality to develop San Bernardo a success and congratulated Masscorp and its partners for their efforts.

Dr Mahathir hoped the project would be the beginning of many more Malaysia-Chile projects and was confident that when completed it would stand as an example of South-South co-operation in action.

On his return to Santiago, he paid a courtesy call on the president of the Senate, Senator Sergio Romero.

Dr Mahathir, who had visited Cuba earlier, will continue on his current Latin American visit by travelling to Uruguay on Wednesday and Thursday before proceeding to Argentina. -- BERNAMA

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