

Estrada will visit Anwar if allowed, says envoy

KUALA LUMPUR: Philippine President Joseph Estrada welcomed Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that he will be allowed to visit Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in prison.

Philippine ambassador to Malaysia Jose Brillantes said the president was happy to visit the sacked deputy prime minister although there was no official invita-

tion from Kuala Lumpur.

"He (Estrada) is taking the cue from the statement made by the Prime Minister," he said. S-25-70-98

In responding to Estrada's suggestion that Anwar, a close friend of the president, be placed under house arrest and not treated like a common criminal, Dr Mahathir had said:

"He's treated very special

I think Mr Estrada can go and see whether the treatment is right or not."

Brillantes said the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs was arranging for a bilateral meeting between Estrada and Dr Mahathir at the sidelines of the Apec summit.

"If there is an invitation (to visit Anwar) during the meeting, then it will be taken

up," he added.

As for now, Brillantes said the Philippine Embassy here was still awaiting instructions from Manila before pursuing the matter further, adding that the Philippine authorities were not sure whether Dr Mahathir's statement was an official invitation.

Estrada confirmed last week that he would be at-

tending the Apec summit after his initial refusal to attend following Anwar's arrest.

"Apec is very important to us, as much as Asean," Brillantes said, adding that the regional grouping's principle of non-interference in the domestic affair of another country should be maintained.