

07/08/2001

Dr M will not discuss Sabah issue with Arroyo

LUMUT, Mon. - Malaysia has no plans to discuss the Philippine claim on Sabah during the three-day visit of President Gloria Arroyo tomorrow.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said as far as he was concerned the issue would not be raised during the meeting between him and Arroyo. He said this after visiting the Royal Malaysian Navy base and PSC-Naval Dockyard Sdn Bhd here today.

The Prime Minister said he expected the discussion to focus on bilateral ties between the two countries and on Malaysia's role in helping the Philippines settle the problems in Mindanao.

He said the discussion would also touch on efforts to enhance regional economic co-operation, including reviving the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines East Asia Growth Area framework.

Arroyo has chosen Malaysia for her first official visit and will lead a delegation of 90 officials.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir said the Government has yet to decide on the type of submarine it would buy.

"We are interested in all the submarines (offered to the Government) but what is important is to increase the participation of locals in the venture."

Dr Mahathir, who was taken on a tour of one of the two submarines delivered to the PSC-Naval Dockyard for refurbishment, said priority would be given to offers which had significant participation of locals.

PSC-Naval Dockyard, with the collaboration with Netherlands' RDM Submarines b.v., has made the offer to supply four submarines to the RMN.

They are two de-commissioned Dutch Navy Swordfish-class submarines which are to be refurbished and commissioned into the RMN as training submarines, and two new Moray-class submarines.

(END)