

04 MAY 2001

Mahathir-Castro

DR MAHATHIR, CASTRO TO DISCUSS BILATERAL COOPERATION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Cuban President Fidel Castro will discuss bilateral cooperation as well as economic and international issues during the latter's three-day state visit to Malaysia beginning on May 11.

"Bilateral cooperation and cooperation within the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement, the world situation... the economic situation will be among the items that will be discussed," the Prime Minister said when asked about the issues that would be raised during Castro's visit.

The Cuban leader is making his first visit to Malaysia at the invitation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Dr Mahathir last visited the Cuban capital of Havana in April last year to attend the first South Summit of the Group of 77 (G77). His first trip to Cuba was in 1997.

Cuba opened its resident embassy here in 1998 while Malaysia set up its permanent mission in Havana last March.

Meanwhile, a Wisma Putra statement said Castro would be accompanied by Cuba's foreign minister and senior government officials.

The statement noted that Kuala Lumpur and Havana have excellent bilateral relations.

"The visit will provide the opportunity for both side to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and to exchange views on issues of mutual concern especially issues facing the developing countries," the statement said.

During Castro's visit, the two countries will sign an Economic, Technical and Cultural Agreement.

The statement said Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah would host a state banquet in honour of the Cuban leader.

Castro's talks with Dr Mahathir at Putrajaya would be followed by a lunch hosted by Dr Mahathir.

-- BERNAMA

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