

# M'sia to contribute financial and technical aid to Lebanon

By TAN KAH PENG

PARIS: Malaysia is expected to contribute several million US dollars in aid and provide technical assistance towards the reconstruction of Lebanon which is being discussed at a special conference at the Elysse Palace today.

*The Star* understands that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will make the offer at the conference attended by leaders of 18 countries such as Germany, Japan, Italy, Spain,

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Canada and the United States.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri invited Dr Mahathir to attend "The Pledging Conference for the Reconstruction of Lebanon," the first which was held last year.

Hariri was on hand to welcome Dr Mahathir when the Prime Minister arrived yesterday at the Lebristol Hotel. He was accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

War-ravaged Lebanon has massive debts of US\$30bil

and the country needs huge infusion of capital to revive its economy.

At the conference, Lebanon is expected to receive pledges of assistance from participating countries in the region of US\$5bil as long term soft loans or in the form of sovereign guarantees to restructure its massive debts.

Earlier, among those at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang to send him off were Cabinet ministers including newly appointed Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis.