

GMA set to hold talks with Hu

President Arroyo will hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao during her three-day visit to China beginning Thursday.

She will depart for Chengdu in Sichuan province Thursday morning, the first stop in her visit.

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Press Secretary Jesus Darcasa said Mrs. Arroyo will convey her sympathies to the people of Chengde, who were hit by a strong earthquake last May.

Last year, Mrs. Arroyo visited China as part of her efforts to draw more investments to the Philippines.

In a statement, Malacañang said Mrs. Arroyo will have lunch with Sichuan provincial officials to be followed by a number of business calls in her hotel before returning to Dejiangyan, one of the most devastated areas during the earthquake.

Mrs. Arroyo will visit the shrine built in memory of the earthquake victims followed by a visit to a resettlement site.

Mrs. Arroyo will hand over some Philippine-made goodies to the children survivors.

On the same day, Mrs. Arroyo will

fly to Beijing, where she will greet Philippine athletes participating in the Olympics at a dinner at the Asia Hotel Beijing.

Mrs. Arroyo's second day in China will be highlighted by courtesy calls and bilateral meetings with a number of world leaders who are also attending the opening ceremony of the quadrennial games.

"Upon the request of the Chinese side, the President will hold a bilateral meeting with President Hu Jintao to discuss the current bilateral relations," Darcasa said.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCI) cited the importance of Mrs. Arroyo's visit to China as a way to boost the morale of Filipino athletes and to attract more investments for the country.

"We believe these will greatly pro-

mote economic cooperation and exchanges between the two countries," the FFCCCI said in a statement.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila said Mrs. Arroyo, US President George W. Bush, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and sports ministers will attend the opening ceremony and important events of the Beijing Olympics.

"Beijing Olympic Games is a great event not only for China, but also for Asia and the whole world. As the host of the 29th Olympics, China welcomes leaders of all countries to attend the opening ceremony and other events of the Beijing Olympics," the embassy said.

"As ASEAN members are important neighboring countries to China, we

warmly welcome ASEAN leaders to attend the opening ceremony and other events of the Beijing Olympics. It is our wish that athletes from ASEAN countries would have outstanding performance in the Games.

"We also hope through the Beijing Olympic Games that the friendship, understanding and cooperation between ASEAN and China would be further strengthened."

- Marvin Sy, Pia Lee-Brugo