

LEE-MAHATHIR R' R' R'

SINGAPORE, AUG 27, (BERNAMA) -- SINGAPORE ENJOYS CLOSER COOPERATION WITH MALAYSIA THAN EVEN BEFORE BECAUSE OF DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD'S STEWARDSHIP! PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW SAID. ---A-S PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAS THE STRENGTH TO OVERRIDE THE HANG-UPS OF MALAYSIAN POLITICIANS AND OFFICIALS THAT AROSE OUT OF THE REPUBLIC'S SEPARATION FROM MALAYSIA, ENCIK LEE SAID.

+THAT MADE POSSIBLE THIS COOPERATION. HE (DR MAHATHIR) GAVE ME AND HE GAVE SINGAPORE THE PERMISSION WHICH NO OTHER PRIME MINISTER AGREED TO, THAT WE CAN DEAL DIRECT WITH ANY STATE GOVERNMENT.

+THAT ENABLED US TO ESTABLISH LINES DIRECT TO JOHOR, TO PENANG. NOW, GOH CHOK TONG HOPES, DIRECT TO Kuantan (PAHANG), WHICH IS GOOD, + HE SAID IN A THREE-HOUR NATIONAL DAY RALLY SPEECH AT KALLANG THEATRE LAST NIGHT.

ENCIK LEE SAID WHEN DR MAHATHIR SAID PRESIDENT SUHARTO SUPPORTED THE GROWTH TRIANGLE (ENCOMPASSING RIAU, SINGAPORE AND JOHOR) AND HE DID NOT OBJECT, THAT WAS AN IMPORTANT POSITION. --- MORE  
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+WHICH MEANS HE IS PREPARED TO SEE JOHOR FORGE AHEAD OF HIS OWN HOME STATE IN KEDAH. BECAUSE ONCE IT IS LINKED UP WITH SINGAPORE, IT IS GOING TO GO MUCH FASTER.

+I WELCOME THAT STATEMENT. I KNOW HE DRIVES A HARD BARGAIN. I CAN TELL YOU FROM EXPERIENCE. BUT I ALSO KNOW HE KEEPS THEM, + ENCIK LEE SAID OF DR MAHATHIR.

ENCIK LEE DESCRIBED DR MAHATHIR'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE GROWTH TRIANGLE IN THE NORTH -- ENCOMPASSING NORTH MALAYSIA, NORTH SUMATRA AND SOUTH THAILAND -- AS ANOTHER BREAKTHROUGH IN THINKING.

SPEAKING IN MALAY, MANDARIN AND ENGLISH, ENCIK LEE PREDICTED THAT IN 10 YEARS TIME SINGAPORE WILL NOT GET WORKERS FROM MALAYSIA OR THAILAND AND IN ANOTHER 15 YEARS NO MORE FROM INDONESIA.

HE SAID THE PROSPECTS IN THE REGION ARE PROMISING WITH THAILAND, MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA GOING TO TAKE OFF.

+I THINK THAILAND AND MALAYSIA ARE ALREADY TAKING OFF. INDONESIA WILL TAKE OFF QUITE QUICKLY, + ENCIK LEE SAID. -- MORE  
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R E247 ENG DHC  
LEE-MAHATHIR 3 SINGAPORE R' R' R'

ENCIK LEE, WHO DELIVERED HIS LAST NATIONAL DAY RALLY AS PRIME MINISTER, SAID THAT THAILAND, MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA HAVE ADAPTED THEIR POLICIES AND JAPANESE INVESTMENTS ARE MOVING IN FAST FOLLOWED BY THE AMERICANS.

+IT WILL BE A DIFFERENT SOUTH-EAST ASIA, IF THE INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES - VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, LAOS - ALSO JOIN IN THE GROWTH GROUP. WITH MUTUAL GROWTH, THERE WILL BE LESS FRICTION, + HE SAID.

HE SAID SINGAPORE COULD HELP BY ENCOURAGING CROSS INVESTMENTS, TAKING STAKES IN EACH OTHER'S ECONOMY.

SINGAPORE BELIEVED THOSE COUNTRIES WERE GOING TO GROW AND IT WILL BE INVESTING IN THEIR STOCK MARKETS, HE SAID.

+DEFINITELY MALAYSIA. PERHAPS WHEN THE MARKET GOES DOWN FURTHER, WE WILL BUY MORE BECAUSE WE THINK IT WILL GO UP. EVENTUALLY, WHEN THE CRISIS IN THE GULF IS OVER, THAILAND, INDONESIA. + -- MORE

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R E248 ENG DHC BMX  
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ENCIK LEE SAID WITH THIS CLIMATE OF COOPERATION IN ASEAN, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN SINGAPORE'S TWO IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS, MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA, INVESTOR CONFIDENCE WILL INCREASE AND THE RATE OF INVESTMENT INTO ALL THREE WILL ALSO INCREASE.

+IT HAS TAKEN 25 YEARS, BUT WE HAVE THE BEGINNINGS OF A SOUND GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH BOTH MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA. IT DOES NOT MEAN WE ARE NOT GOING TO HAVE DIFFICULTIES.

+IT DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE NOT GOING TO READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS THAT SOMEBODY SAYS THAT WE ARE TRYING TO FIX THEIR TOURIST TRADE. WHY, I DON'T KNOW,+ ENCIK LEE SAID.

HE SAID THAT IT DID NOT MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE NO MORE AMAZING DISCOVERIES THAT THE SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES (SAF) RATIONS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN GUNUNG LEDANG.

+WHAT WOULD THE SAF WANT TO FIND OUT? SOME SECRET MACHINERY OR TELESCOPE IN GUNUNG LEDANG? I MUST ASK THEM. MAYBE THERE IS SOME MYSTERIOUS PLANT THERE. WHY SHOULD WE WANT TO CHECK THAT AREA?-- MORE

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R E249 ENG BMX DHC  
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+BUT WE MUST GET USED TO IT. WELL, I HAVE GOT USED TO IT. AND THERE WILL BE MORE,+ HE SAID.

BUT, HE ADDED, EACH TIME SUCH A THING HAPPENED, WHILST SINGAPORE DID NOT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY, SOME PEOPLE MAY TAKE IT SERIOUSLY. SINGAPORE SHOULD COME UP WITH A PROPER STATEMENT.

+WHAT SHOULD SID, WHICH IS OUR EXTERNAL INTELLIGENCE OR MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, WANT TO SEND TRACKERS UP GUNUNG LEDANG FOR? WHAT MILITARY VALUE IS IT?

ENCIK LEE ALSO COMMENTED ON INFORMATION MINISTER DATUK MOHAMED RAHMAT'S STATEMENT IN JOHOR BAHRU ON SATURDAY THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA.

+NOW, FROM HIM, WHO HAS ALWAYS HAD SOMEWHAT CRITICAL APPROACH TO SINGAPORE'S ACTIVITIES OR ATTITUDES AND POLICIES, I SAY THAT IS REAL PROGRESS, AND I WELCOME THAT STATEMENT.+ -- BERNAMA

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