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Indonesia-Habibie

HABIBIE CONFIRMED AS INDONESIAN VICE-PRESIDENT

JAKARTA, March 11 (Bernama) -- Prof Dr Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie (BJ Habibie) was unanimously confirmed by the Peoples' Consultative Assembly (MPR) tonight as Indonesian Vice-President for the term ending 2003.

Habibie, who last held the post of Research and Technology Ministry, replaces Try Sutrisno, a retired general and former chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces.

The confirmation of the appointment of Habibie, the sole candidate for the post, was announced by MPR Speaker Harmoko.

Habibie will be sworn in at the MPR building tomorrow morning.

Born in Pare-pare, South Sulawesi on June 25, 1936, Habibie received his education in Aachen, Germany, in aircraft construction engineering up to doctorate level.

After receiving his PhD in 1965, he worked with aircraft manufacturer Hamburger Flugzeugbau (HFB) and later with Messerschmitt Boelkow Blohm (MBB) in Germany where he became one of its vice-presidents.

He was recalled by President Suharto in 1974 and four years later was appointed Research and Technology Minister.

Habibie was nominated vice-president for his capability and experience and continuity in national development and also because he could work with President Suharto, a prerequisite for the post.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is among the foreign government leaders to a congratulatory message to Suharto who was sworn in today as Indonesian President for the seventh five-year term.

According to the ANTeve television station, the message was conveyed through the Malaysian embassy here.

The other leaders who have sent similar messages included President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Li Peng of China and President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines. -- BERNAMA

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