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Gus-Syed Hamid

INDONESIA WANTS CLOSER TIES WITH MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Indonesia wants to forge closer bilateral ties with Malaysia as it believes this could contribute to regional peace and stability, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

Both countries also reaffirmed their non-interference policy in the internal affairs of each other, he told reporters on the outcome of the meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and President Abdurrahman Wahid, here.

Abdurrahman with a 40-member delegation arrived here for a two-day working visit as part of his whirlwind four-day tour to eight Southeast Asian countries, starting with Singapore.

Clad in a grey suit, Abdurrahman was seen ushered by his daughter, Inayah Wulandari into a hotel where he is staying for the night. He is accompanied by his wife, Sinta Nuriyah and another daughter, Zanuba Arifah Chefsoh.

Abdurrahman had earlier called on Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah at the Istana Negara.

Syed Hamid said the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Abdurrahman was friendly and warm, with both exchanging ideas openly and frankly.

"In fact, Dr Mahathir and Abdurrahman have agreed to reinstate regular get-together between the leaders of the two nations to enable them to exchange views on various matters," he said.

Asked whether the issue of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was raised during the meeting as Abdurrahman is reportedly a close friend of Anwar, Syed Hamid said:

"I think President Abdurrahman has reaffirmed that he is the president of Indonesia. He is the government and he knows how to act the proper way a leader should act."

"We must separate a person who is outside the government and the person who has become a leader of a government," he said.

Syed Hamid said he believed that President Abdurrahman had reiterated that his dealing with Malaysia is through the government of Malaysia and his contact is Dr Mahathir as his counterpart in Malaysia.

"Other than that he will not do something that is not proper," he said.

On Aceh, he said Indonesia had asked Malaysia to assist it finding a solution to the Aceh problem.

"Indonesia wants to know whatever ways Malaysia can assist to achieve reconciliation to the Aceh problem," he said.

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