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Mahathir-Indonesia

M'SIA RESPECTS THE CHOICE OF THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the election of Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur as the new Indonesian president is the choice of the Indonesian people and Malaysia respects that choice.

Dr Mahathir said: "We hope the president will receive the kind of support in order to facilitate the workings of the government".

The prime minister said this after signing a joint statement between him and visiting Venezuelan President Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias.

Abdurrahman today defeated Megawati Sukarnoputri to become the country's first elected president by polling 373 votes, against 313 for Megawati in the 700-member People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar congratulated the new president, describing the election as a truly free and democratic one.

"I think we should respect the result," he said.

He said Malaysia looked forward to a healthy and strong relation with Indonesia.

"We hope that the situation will get back to normal so that they can concentrate on efforts to bring back the country to positive recovery," he said.

Syed Hamid said the Indonesian people had chosen the president through the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and he expressed the hope that normalcy will return and reconciliation will happen in Indonesia.

-- BERNAMA

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