

21/10/1999

PM congratulates new president

Adeline Ong

MALAYSIA yesterday congratulated Abdurrahman Wahid for being elected the new president of Indonesia.

"It is the choice of the Indonesian people. We respect their choice.

"We hope that the new president will receive the kind of support in order to facilitate the workings of a Government," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He spoke at a press conference after the signing of a joint declaration with Venezuelan president Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Wahid was voted president by Indonesia's People's Consultative Committee. He defeated pro-democracy opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri while President B.J. Habibie withdrew from the contest. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, meanwhile, said Wahid's election is the democratic choice of the Indonesian people.

"We hope with this decision, Indonesia will be calm and peaceful, there will not be any political turmoil, and an opportunity will be given to the new leadership to strengthen Indonesia," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia hopes bilateral relations with Indonesia will continue to be strengthened through mutually beneficial areas of cooperation.

Foreign Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said that the election of president Abdurrahman Wahid was truly a free democratic move.

"We look forward to a very healthy and strong relations with Indonesia. We hope that the situation will be back to normal and that they can concentrate on efforts to a positive recovery," he said.

Bernamea reports: The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah has sent a congratulatory message to Abdurrahman Wahid who was elected the new president of Indonesia.

According to a statement by Wisma Putra, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong expressed confidence that under the leadership of Abdurrahman, Indonesia's fourth president, the republic and people of Indonesia could develop and achieve progress and prosperity in line with their wishes and aspirations.

(END)