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Philippines-Malaysia

MALAYSIA HAPPY PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT ISSUE SETTLED

OSAKA, Jan 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is happy that the issue over the Philippine President has been resolved, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here today.

"I am confident that new Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo will cooperate with Malaysia," he told reporters after talks with Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Takeo Hiranuma.

Dr Mahathir, who is here on a four-day visit, said President Arroyo could now focus on restoring the Philippines particularly from the aspect of the economy.

"This is because the value of the peso, for instance, has fallen badly," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped that under President Arroyo the Philippine economy could be rehabilitated and Malaysia could interact with that country in the area of trade.

According to foreign news agencies, Arroyo was sworn in as president following a declaration by Chief Justice Hilario Davide of the Supreme Court that the presidency was vacant.

Former President Joseph Estrada was reported as saying that he gave up his office to avoid being an obstacle to the country's healing process.

Meanwhile in Kuala Lumpur Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia was happy to see the peaceful transfer of power in the Philippines,

"Malaysia is happy and relieved to see the transfer of power in the Philippines achieved in a peaceful manner without resort to violence and in accordance with the Philippine Constitution," he said in a statement released by Wisma Putra.

"Malaysia congratulates Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on her assumption of office as the 14th president of the Republic of the Philippines and looks forward to working closely with her new administration," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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