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`We can take pride for putting in place a smooth leadership transition'

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Malaysia can take pride for putting in place a smooth leadership transition that sees no parallel anywhere else in the world, said Malaysian Trades Union Congress president Senator Zainal Rampak today.

The tradition, he added, which was set by Tunku Abdul Rahman, was continued by Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn, and now by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"It is this tradition of smooth leadership transition that has enabled us to continuously enjoy political stability, economic progress and national harmony since independence," he added.

US Ambassador to Malaysia Marie T. Huhtala said Washington sees the good relations between the two countries continuing.

She said the succession exercise would not jeopardise the cordial ties both countries enjoyed as Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, too, was both a capable leader and a familiar face in the US Government circles.

"We know them well and are comfortable with both of them. I don't think the leadership change will have any impact on the US-Malaysia relationship," she said.

Danish ambassador to Malaysia Lasse Reimann, speaking in Kuching, said Dr Mahathir will be among the leaders from Asia expected to attend the Fourth Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem 4) in Copenhagen in September.

"The summit is a meeting for some of the Asian countries and the European Union aimed at establishing greater ties between the two regions," Reimann said.

Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said most foreign investors in Malaysia should feel at ease with Malaysia's smooth transition of power.

"Although there is no denying that they may be shocked and surprised at first over the news, the policies remain the same," he said.

In paying tribute to Penang-born Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who will succeed Dr Mahathir, Koh described the Deputy Prime Minister as a "very committed, caring and capable" leader.

Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said he would meet all State Assemblymen to explain the supreme council's decision to unanimously support the formula for the transition of power.

"The situation needs to be explained and there must be undivided support for the decision from all members," he said, adding that everyone fully supported the move which allows for a smooth transition of power.

Vice-president of the Johor Consumer Association Faizal Omar said Dr Mahathir's wisdom in agreeing to stay on until October next year would preve political and economic stability and ensure continuity.

In Kuala Terengganu, the Malay Students Federation expressed confidence that Abdullah as Prime Minister would continue with the leadership of excellence.

USM's deputy vice-chancellor of student affairs Datuk Associate Professor Jamaludin Mohaiadin, in praising Dr Mahathir's leadership, said the emphasis placed on promoting English widely was one which the university "strongly agreed" with.

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