

05 AUG 2003

Putin-Malaysia

MALAYSIA'S SUCCESS RAISES ITS INTERNATIONAL STANDING, SAYS PUTIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin said today that the successes attained by Malaysia have considerably raised its standing internationally and placed the country among the leading prosperous nations of South East Asia.

He said the principled and weighted policy pursued by Malaysia over the years had produced tangible results.

Putin said Russia knew fully well that over a relatively short period Malaysia had covered a complicated path of economic and social development without major social upheavals.

"Economic, social and political models put in place with the direct participation of (Datuk Seri Dr) Mr Mahathir (Mohamad) have proved highly efficient.

"Even in a short stay in your country and acquaintance with the achievements of its people make it possible to get convinced in that," he said in his translated Russian speech at a state banquet hosted by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail at Istana Negara here.

Also present were the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, several Cabinet ministers, foreign diplomats and other dignitaries.

The Russian President said Malaysia had always drawn genuine interest of the Russians, attracting them not only by the beauty of its nature but also its exotic environment.

"Famous sailor Krusenstern, outstanding scientist Miklukho-Maklai, and many other Russian travellers and explorers were unanimous in their evaluation of the friendliness and decency of the Malaysians and admired their arts and skills," he said.

Expressing his gratitude to Dr Mahathir for this opportunity to meet him, Putin said his contact with the Malaysian Prime Minister may already be called regular ones.

Both leaders had met at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) fora, the recent Evian G-8 Summit and during Dr Mahathir's visit to Moscow in March last year.

"In this connection I should point out that Mr Mahathir's visit has become a powerful impetus for the intensification of political and economic relations between our nations," he said.

He said the conferment of the highest state award of Russia, Order of Friendship, on Dr Mahathir today was yet another piece of evidence of the merits of the Malaysian leadership in the development of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Later, Putin bade farewell to Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin at Istana Negara.

Also present were Tuanku Fauziah, Dr Mahathir, Syed Hamid and Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, the minister-in-attendance.

Putin arrived yesterday for a two-day official visit at the invitation of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Putin's visit is to reciprocate the one made by the Prime Minister to Russia in March last year.

The Russian President and his entourage later left for the KL International Airport in Sepang to return to Moscow.

-- BERNAMA

HS HS YBY