

RESPONSE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AT
THE DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR BY THE
VISITING AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER, THE
RT. HON'BLE GOUGH WHITLAM, AT ISTANA
TETAMU, KUALA LUMPUR ON 30TH JANUARY,
1974

Mr Prime Minister, Mrs Whitlam, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr Prime Minister, for honouring me so kindly in this way tonight. I am also grateful to you for the very warm and gracious sentiments you have expressed about me personally and about our country.

It has been a great pleasure for my wife and myself and all of us in Malaysia to have had you and Mrs Whitlam spend some time with us in Kuala Lumpur. The particular profession that we have chosen, Mr Prime Minister, makes it extremely difficult for us to have more than brief encounters with each other. These encounters, moreover, usually take place in musty official surroundings amidst the rush of other pre-occupations. It has, therefore, been a real pleasure to be able during these few days to meet and talk together with you under more relaxed circumstances. I hope this will be only one of many such occasions.

Mr Prime Minister.

During your short stay with us, I am sure you must have been made aware of the great friendliness and respect that Malaysians hold for Australia and her people. Our two peoples have a much greater opportunity than ever before to interact with one another—as students, as businessmen, as professionals and increasingly as simple visitors to our respective countries. As the ties of the past that bound us make way for new changes, the one thing that will remain constant, is this quality of warmth that exists in our relations. Australians and Malaysians have learnt, I feel, to look at each other not as strangers to be treated with reserve or even suspicion, but as friends to be welcomed and to help and be helped. As our societies become more complex and more impersonal, these simple virtues of open friendliness and concern between our peoples will preserve the quality of relations of which we both can be proud.

Mr Prime Minister.

If the heritage of the past which we share of a common historical background has vitalised our relations, I am confident that the future is likely to see the continued vitality of such relations through our common endeavour to build a better world in this region in which we live. I look forward to working with you, Mr Prime Minister, to that end. The last few days have more than confirmed my hopes that there are many areas in which we can co-operate fruitfully together to attain our common objective.

Mr Prime Minister.

I sincerely hope that you and Mrs Whitlam and your party have enjoyed your short stay with us, as much as we have enjoyed having you. We would be very happy to have you visit us again whenever you feel so inclined. You have brought nice warm weather to us since you arrived and I can assure you whenever you visit us again our welcome will be always as warm as our weather.

Now in saying good-bye for the present, to our hosts friends may I now invite you all to join me in a toast to the good health and happiness of the Prime Minister of Australia and Mrs Whitlam, and to the continued friendship and esteem between our two countries and our two peoples.