

Malaysia hopes for continuity in Thai reconciliation

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BANGKOK: Malaysia said it was pleased that the reconciliation process in southern Thailand was moving in the right direction but hoped to see continuity once the interim government handed over power to an elected one.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar (*pic*) said continuity was important as



various programmes planned by both countries had taken off the ground and it was important that there was confidence that this would go on.

"The interim government is serious about it (reconciliation). We hope once they hand over power to a democratically elected one, there will be continuity," he said in an interview after the 10th Malaysia-Thai Joint Commission Meeting here yesterday.

Asked if Malaysia was worried that there would be no continuity after the new government comes into power, Syed Hamid said he was not so concerned but reiterated that for any programme aimed at long-term benefit to be successful, there must be certainty.

Syed Hamid said he was given assurance by the Thai leadership that when the next government takes over, it would continue to work with Malaysia to implement the plans both countries had agreed on to find a lasting and durable solution to the southern conflict.

During his visit here, Syed Hamid had an audience with King Bhumibol Adulyadej, met Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont and held bilateral talks with his counterpart Nitya Pibulsonggram.

Both countries have agreed to implement 3E programmes (education, employment and entrepreneurship) to help solve the conflict in restive southern Thailand. — Bernama