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PM: M'sia to keep bilateral relations with US as Trump not a stranger

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Trump's 'surprising' win reflects US voters' strong sentiments on addressing country's economic slowdown

by ALIFAH ZAINUDDIN

PRIME Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak said Malaysia's bilateral relations with the US will continue as the new president-elect is "not a stranger" to him.

"Donald Trump has been consistent in his message to make America great again, promising stronger economy and high paying jobs," Najib told reporters after launching the eUsahawan @Marketplace at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Najib said Trump's "surprising" win also reflects US voters' strong sentiments on addressing the country's economic slowdown.

"Trump's success as an entrepreneur has prompted voters to give way to an unconventional politician that is different than those with experience in Washington," he said, adding that voters are keen on "trying something new".

Trump, a Republican nominee, recorded an unconventional presidential victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton after claiming swing states in Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania in what has been dubbed as the most gruelling, discordant campaign in US history.

The Malaysian government issued a statement to congratulate Trump on his election as



Najib (left) and Yasmin at the launch of the eUsahawan @Marketplace at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday. The initiative creates an e-trade ecosystem for local entrepreneurs to expand to international markets

the 45th president of the US and hopes Malaysia's cordial relations with the US as signified through the Comprehensive Partnership will be strengthened.

As of September 2016, Malaysia-US trade has seen a double-digit growth of 11.5% to RM59.35 billion, with the US accounting for 10.4% of Malaysia's total exports.

Najib said Trump is expected to continue extending ties with other economies as the world's largest economy looks to strengthen its fiscal position.

Trump, 70, has defied all expectations since the start of his political campaign more than a year ago. His populist antics have been criticised the world over and earlier polls were skewed towards Clinton.

However, Trump has proven his critics wrong as his move to ride on the "crest of a popular revolution" has now made him president-elect.

Meanwhile, the eUsahawan @Marketplace programme that was launched by the PM is a new initiative by Malaysian Digital Economy

Cooperation (MDEC) to promote local entrepreneurship in collaboration with seven online trading platforms — Lelong.my, 11street.my, AVANA, EasyStore, AmaxMall, MyBazaar and Shopee.

MDEC CEO Datuk Yasmin Mahmood said the initiative, which began operations since July 2016, creates an e-trade ecosystem for local entrepreneurs to expand to international markets.

"There is a movement of digital entrepreneurship. We see a significant potential through this ecosystem and

our aim is that the expansion into the international market can be increased," she said.

On the recent appointment of Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma as the government's digital economy advisor, Najib said that Ma is expected to consult mainly on the Digital Free Trade Zone.

"We are expected to launch the world's first Digital Free Trade Zone in March 2017. The characteristics, incentives and regulations of the digital hub will be supervised by Ma to make the package attractive," he said.

Pic by Muhd Amin Nahanul