

Agong Calls For Closer M'sia-Vietnam Ties Amid World Economic Uncertainty
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From Siti Aisyah Harun

HANOI, Sept 6 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah said countries like Malaysia and Vietnam should work together to overcome hurdles in a world facing economic uncertainty and other challenges that might come without warning.

He noted that within the international fora, the two countries often shared similar positions on a large number of important issues.

"We hope that such cooperation and support for each other will continue and be strengthened at the regional and international levels for the benefit of the two countries.

"This close cooperation is undoubtedly, important to safeguard the interest of our countries globally," Tuanku Abdul Halim said at the state banquet hosted by Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang in Hanoi, Friday night.

Held at Hanoi's International Convention Centre, the event was also graced by Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah Hamidun. The Malaysian royal couple arrived here Thursday for a four-day state visit to Vietnam.

Tuanku Abdul Halim described his visit to Vietnam as very timely and significant for bilateral ties since the two countries established diplomatic relations 40 years ago, in March 1973.

Since then, he said, relations and cooperation between Kuala Lumpur and Hanoi had seen a significant leap up to the present day.

The speech alluded to Malaysia's investment in Vietnam which had reached nearly US\$10.2 billion (RM33.6 billion) in 429 projects, while bilateral trade stood at about US\$9.03 billion (RM29.7 billion) last year.

"Our hope is that the good relationship between our two countries would be further enhanced and extended to cover all areas of mutual interest for the future well-being of the people from both nations.

"As Malaysia and Vietnam are close neighbours geographically and share common culture, we feel that this goal is not impossible to achieve," said Tuanku Abdul Halim.

Malaysia and Vietnam had signed numerous cooperation agreements in fields like economy, trade, science and technology, aviation, investment, banking, tourism, youth and sports, besides memoranda of understanding in other fields.

Tuanku Abdul Halim said he was proud of the close working relations between Malaysia and Vietnam within the ASEAN framework towards achieving the ASEAN Community by 2015.

Meanwhile, Truong said his government noted with satisfaction the positive and substantial developments in the friendship and multifaceted cooperation between Vietnam and Malaysia after 40 years of diplomatic relations.

"Our political ties are increasingly trustworthy and bonded while the security and defence

ties are further strengthened," he said.

He said that Malaysia had emerged as the eighth largest investor among countries and territories investing in Vietnam.

Referring to Malaysia's 56th anniversary of independence recently, the president took the opportunity to congratulate the Malaysian people on the significant achievements in the past six decades of nation-building.

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