

Malaysians, new leaders hailed over peaceful transition of power

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By Azman Ujang

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- The peaceful transition of power in Malaysia after the May 9 general election speaks volumes of the wisdom and the indomitable spirit of the country's new leaders and the people of Malaysia, said Singapore High Commissioner to Malaysia Vanu Gopala Menon.

"On behalf of the Government and the Republic of Singapore, I would like to offer, once again, my warmest congratulations to the Pakatan Harapan government and the people of Malaysia for ushering in a new dawn for your country," he said at the Singapore National Day reception at a hotel here last night.

Among the well over 1,000 people present were the guests of honour, Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu and Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali.

Menon said the past three months had been a roller coaster ride for him and his colleagues at the High Commission and many had teased him that his job had become a lot more difficult after May 9.

"In a way, they are right. Building links with the new government, understanding how the new government works, and charting a new, forward-looking course for Singapore-Malaysia relations is hard work," he said.

But the envoy said the change in government had also made life more interesting for Singapore diplomats here and they all felt a new buzz of energy across Malaysian society.

"I feel honoured and humbled to be living in these interesting times and to witness

first-hand the writing of a new chapter in Malaysia's history," he added.

Menon said that with the new government, Singapore already had a number of high-level engagements, including the early visit here by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to congratulate Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on becoming the prime minister for the second time.

This was followed by a series of visits to Singapore by Mohamad Sabu, Mohamed Azmin, Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, Local Government and Housing Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin, Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman and Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

"Singapore stands ready to work with the new Pakatan Harapan government as it takes Malaysia on a new journey. As we work together on a new, forward-looking agenda for bilateral and regional cooperation, it is worth remembering that some things have not changed and will not change. The deep historical, familial and cultural links that exist between Singapore and Malaysia will remain a fact of life.

"The fates of our two countries are intrinsically intertwined. Any crisis that befalls one of us will inevitably affect the other. Hence, a strong, stable and prosperous Malaysia is good for Singapore. Likewise, a strong, stable and prosperous Singapore is in Malaysia's interest," he said.

Menon said that being such close neighbours, it was inevitable that both sides would not see eye to eye on some issues at times but they should not let such differences on old and new issues to undermine the deep, broad and long-standing relationship nurtured over the past 53 years.

"Malaysia will always be an important partner for Singapore and we will remain committed to a strong and mutually beneficial partnership," he said.

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