

Indonesia's incoming VP: Indonesia to maintain good ties with Singapore

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Indonesia will continue to maintain good ties with Singapore.

Indonesia's vice president designate Boediono described Singapore as a neighbour who's been at its side both at good and bad times

"Indonesia will continue to maintain excellent relations with Singapore. This is because our national interests dictate this. No matter from which angle we see it -- diplomatically, strategically, economically, socially -- it is imperative for us to nurture good relations between our two countries."

Speaking at an academic event in Singapore, Mr Boediono said bilateral ties between the two countries are stable and solid, noting that leaders from both sides know each other well.

There are also strong people-to-people contacts through trade, education, tourism and so on.

But he added that the bilateral relationship is not free from challenges.

He cited outstanding issues like the Defence Cooperation Agreement and the Extradition Treaty, which have yet been ratified by the Indonesian parliament.

The treaties were signed by both countries in April 2007 after years of discussions.

But many Indonesian lawmakers refused to ratify the Extradition Treaty because it was negotiated in parallel with the defence agreement between the two countries.

When asked how does the new administration plan to handle the outstanding issue, Mr Boediono gave this response:

"If we could solve that, that would be a step forward. What we should do ... I think we should try to work out together. And the Extradition Treaty was very feasible in terms of our domestic public and if we could that -- certainly it's up both sides to do that. I don't know the details. But certainly that's the direction we should make the best efforts -- on both sides."

Meanwhile, Mr Boediono says there are still many "low-hanging fruits" that can be reaped:

"In the area of infrastructure development, I guess if Singapore could find areas you could play a role, you are most welcomed, because almost any aspect of infrastructure we need to accelerate -- power, roads, railways, ports, clean water and whatever. So I think they are areas we could work together."