

'Mahathir, hero of modern Malaysia'

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KUCHING, Thurs. — Sarawak chief minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud has likened the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to a national "hero" who is responsible for the building of a modern Malaysia.

Addressing a gathering before presenting the Prime Minister with the Key of the Freedom to the City at the Kuching Dewan Suarah civic centre here last night Tan Sri Taib said Dr Mahathir

had faced many challenges during his 10-year tenure of leadership.

Despite these challenges and a recession, Malaysia has come out even stronger with the economic growth exceeding 10 per cent.

He said the Prime Minister had also given Kuala Lumpur an international identity by transforming the City into one of the most modern cities in the world. It is also one of the cleanest in the region.

Compare what Kuala Lumpur was in 1980 with what it is today and you will realise that our capital is the pride of the country," he said.

Tan Sri Taib said that, inspired by the Prime Minister's vision, Sarawak has also gone ahead with plans to develop Kuching City and eight other divisional towns (Kota Samarahan, Sri Aman, Sibul, Sarikei, Bintulu, Kapit, Miri, Limbang).

Kuching already has been

transformed from a sleepy hollow in 1980 to a modern City and more was in store.

"In 10 years all the nine divisional centres in Sarawak will be developed into beautiful and modern towns."

Tan Sri Taib said that by handing over the Key to the City of Kuching, the gates of Sarawak is now symbolically open to greater rapport between Sarawak and the peninsula.