

14/12/1997

Abdullah: Adopt proactive, positive attitude

PETALING JAYA, Sat. - Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today called on the Asean business community to adopt a proactive and positive attitude in dealing with the economic problems afflicting the region.

"The private sector has been and must continue to be the main engine of growth for Asean.

"The growth momentum in Asean can only be fuelled by a dynamic, resilient and competitive private sector."

Abdullah was speaking at the opening of a business forum entitled A Private Sector Salute to Asean opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Sunway Resort Hotel.

He said the primacy of economics in Asean had remained despite the financial problems, while its future continued to lie on the strength of the economic cooperation of its members.

"This is an opportunity to restructure and re-engineer so that our companies will emerge much stronger and more resilient in the aftermath of the problems."

He said the economic problems which was the result of the currency and stock market situation over the past several months had posed new challenges for Asean.

"Today, whilst the security threat to Asean has diminished considerably, new uncertainties have clouded the region.

"The wealth that has been built up over the past three to four decades have been reduced in value by 30 to 50 per cent, when the currencies of many Asean member countries dropped correspondingly."

Abdullah however expressed his confidence in a recovery based on the commitment shown by Asean Governments towards the market system and its continuous openness and transparency.

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