

13 OCT 1999

MALAYSIA-RECOVERY

MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP PUTS MALAYSIA ON FAST RECOVERY TRACK

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's fast and successful recovery from the Asian financial crisis is attributed largely to the strong leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed, said Thailand newspaper, The Nation.

In an article "Leadership Puts Malaysia on Track" published on Oct 9, The Nation said, " Malaysia's leadership was decisive and had broad vision and the success owed a lot to the decisiveness and vision of Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamed, one of the world's most decisive leaders," it said quoting Thai Farmers Research Centre.

It said Malaysia's political situation is stable and in his 18 years in office, Mahathir has taken firm control of the country. Strong political power and support helped him run a smooth administration.

The article was released to the local press by National Economic Action Council here today.

Malaysia has shown the world it could avoid painful economic reforms the International Monetary Fund prescribed for its neighbours and sail successfully through the Asian financial crisis, said The Nation.

Malaysia is witnessing a quicker recovery than Thailand, without external support, and the success is attributable to the country's strong leadership, it said.

It said in Malaysia local people and businesses seemed to experience a less painful path to recovery than Thailand.

It said the factors contributing to the success of Malaysia, included low interest-rate policies, pegging ringgit to boost exports, increased budget spending and tax on foreign capital outflow.

Comparing to the situation in Malaysia and Thailand, it said, Malaysia's external debt was not alarming, at just 50 percent of GDP at the end of 1997, compared with 78 percent in Thailand.

Most of Malaysia debts were medium-and long-term debts, unlike the short term debts in Thailand, it added.

It saw the importance of social discipline, noting that Malaysia rarely experiences social unrest, thanks to strict laws and enforcement, enabling social conflicts to be contained quickly and effectively, so that there was minimal fallout on national economic problems.-- BERNAMA

MSL KTC