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Vision

RECOVERY ABILITY A BIG BOOST TO VISION 2020 ATTAINMENT, SAYS TAIB

SIBU, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's ability to recover from the regional economic crisis is a big boost to its successful attainment of the Vision 2020 objectives, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said today.

He said the recovery was especially through the efforts of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had braved outside criticisms but in the end his methods had proven his critics wrong.

Speaking at a grand parade-cum-mass gathering to mark the 76th birthday of Yang Di-pertua Negeri Tun Datuk Patinggi Ahmad Zaidi Adruce Mohamed Nor at the town's new sports field, he said Dr Mahathir's ideas also had resulted in further strengthening the country's economy.

Thus, with the experience in overcoming such a big challenge as the crisis together with the effective leadership and the strong economy, the Vision 2020 objectives to make Malaysia an industrialised nation by the year 2020 was not unattainable, he said.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Mohammad Salahuddin, who was sworn in as the acting Head of State yesterday in Kuching, officiated at the function in the absence of Tun Ahmad Zaidi Adruce who is in Kuala Lumpur recovering from an illness.

Taib said the country's economic base which had been fortified over the years could now be the base for its future struggle especially in facing the challenges of globalisation.

However, he said, in order to further develop the economy, the people could no longer act as if time would be on their side forever and to simply choose their own course of action.

"Our position now is whether we can get even better or dilly-dally and then get into trouble with currency traders and market manipulators," he said.

He said the obvious choice was for the people to get even better to become strong, modernised and advanced.

Taib said Malaysia's economy was closely linked to the world economies through its increasing exports of timber logs, agriculture and manufactured wood products apart from the coming in of foreign investment.

Taib said that other countries were also in the same businesses and as such new ways had to be found in order for Malaysia to be able to compete successfully with them.

He said one of the ways in doing so was to go into the production of high technology products.

In Sarawak, he said, the first factory in Malaysia to produce wafer used as semi-conductor component in hi-tech industry would be ready in July next year.

It should be able to go into production by the end of the year which would make the state a major player in the hi-tech field in the region.

Taib said such transformation would call for a review of the education system in the hope of producing enough numbers of technical and management workforce besides putting in huge amount of capital.

He suggested it should give more emphasis on subjects like Science and Mathematics.

At the function, Taib also named the new RM10 million sports field after Ahmad Zaidi who he said was improving but doctors attending to him had advised him to take a three-month leave to recuperate further.

Members of the federal and state cabinets and local dignitaries and some 10,000 people were present at the function.

-- BERNAMA

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