

10/10/2001

Investors' confidence intact

Rupa Damodaran

IN the aftermath of the Sept 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US, there have been fears that many American companies may want to put their investment plans in other regions on hold.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, however, allayed these fears, saying investors' confidence in Malaysia has not been shaken despite bad publicity.

She said on Monday she was informed that an American company has indicated business expansion plans totalling US150 million (RM570 million) for an electronics-based company in Penang.

"These expansion plans means that they are really confident... it is a good testimony for Malaysia," she said at a Press briefing in Kuala Lumpur on Monday.

On the performance outlook of manufacturers in the country in view of the current global events, she said:

"We're looking to certainty, predictability and stability even if this means that the country would see a slower growth... we do not want to be rich from global tragedies."

On the forthcoming Budget 2002 to be tabled next Friday, Rafidah said her Ministry had submitted 22 proposals to the Finance Minister.

"They encompass manufacturing and related sectors like services and logistics and trade, and also relevant suggestions we received from the private sector over the last few months," she said.

She said the proposals focus on making these sectors more competitive.

On the question of tax cuts, Rafidah said tax cuts should not be looked as the main measure to make the private sector more competitive.

"The Government wants the private sector to make money first and overcome other problems like production costs and labour shortage ... tax cuts are just the icing on the cake."

On the Apec CEO summit to be held in Shanghai from Oct 18 to 20, Rafidah said 13 CEOs would be attending.

They include Petronas president and CEO Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican, Tenaga Nasional Bhd chairman Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis, Maybank Bhd managing director Datuk Amirsham A.Aziz, Sapura Group president and CEO Datuk Shahril Shamsuddin, Celcom (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, Hong Leong Bank Bhd senior group managing director Datuk James Lim Cheng Poh and Konsortium Logistik Bhd executive chairman Mirzan Mahathir.

Rafidah will be attending the Apec leaders meeting to be held in Shanghai, China on Oct 20 and 21.

It will be preceded by the Apec Ministerial Meeting on Oct 17 and 18, Informal Senior Officials Meeting on Oct 15 and 16 and other related meetings including the Apec Business Advisory Council Meeting from Oct 18 till 21.