

GDP up 10.1% first quarter, fastest in 10 years
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Malaysia's economy leapt 10.1 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, its highest jump in a decade, and is on track for six percent full-year growth, Prime Minister Najib Razak said today.

"Following the favourable growth performance coupled with the government and economic transformation initiatives the growth target of 6.0 percent for 2010 is achievable," the prime minister told a press conference.

sibu by election 120510 najib at hoover mission house"Growth was supported by strong domestic demand and global economic recovery."

The result for the three months to March, which exceeded expectations, came after a revised 4.4 percent growth rate in the last quarter of 2009.

It was the highest rate recorded since the first quarter of 2000, when the economy grew 11.7 percent.

"All major economic sectors recorded robust growth, particularly in the manufacturing sector, which grew 16.9 percent," Najib said.

"Growth in the sector was driven by electric and electronics, transport equipment as well as wood products and furniture."

The services sector also registered a strong performance with 8.5 percent growth, while the construction sector expanded 8.7 percent and the agriculture sector by 6.8 percent.

"Meanwhile investment grew strongly at 5.4 percent, reflecting a recovery in investor confidence," Najib said.

Not likely to be affected by Europe's woes

Imports expanded 27.5 percent in the quarter while exports rose 19.3 percent.

Najib said that the Eurozone's woes were unlikely to clip Malaysia's performance in 2010.

"There is little evidence of contagion effect. I think we will be able to reach the figure of 6.0 percent this year, godwilling," he said.

Malaysia earlier this year unveiled plans for economic reforms including an overhaul of racial preferences for majority Malays, part of a roadmap to achieve developed-nation status by 2020.

- AFP