

Sabahans must thank their lucky stars for Musa Aman
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The facts speak for themselves. If Chief Minister Musa Aman is corrupt, Sabah would be bankrupt by now. But instead, he has been giving Sabah a surplus of more than RM1 billion every year since he took over the reins of the state government.

The Sabah economy was in the doldrums when Musa became Sabah's 14th chief minister. There was hardly any money in the treasury as the state had a deficit of about RM3 billion.

'The government did not even have enough money to pay contractors because the state reserves were down to only RM168 million,' said Masidi Manjun, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment.

He said that the situation was so bad that even the state-owned Yayasan Sabah was almost bankrupt. 'Yayasan Sabah could not even pay salaries,' Masidi said. 'So, it had to 'release' many of the staff'.

But Masidi said Yayasan Sabah's fortune changed dramatically with Musa at the helm of the Sabah government.

Through Musa's excellent business and financial acumen, he quickly turned Yayasan Sabah around. He reorganised the Yayasan business operations, making many companies not only highly profitable, but well-respected internationally.

YSG Biotech Sdn Bhd is a case in point. It has become the world's leading biotech company in tissue culturing of superior quality teak for the plantation industry so much so that it has been exporting teak plants to buyer countries such as Australia, South America, Tanzania and Indonesia without phytosanitary constraints.

Today, Yayasan Sabah as a group has reserves of RM3 billion, a far cry from 2003 when it did not even have money for staff salaries.

The state coffers also quickly recovered, registering a reserve of RM1.7 billion during his first year as chief minister. Currently, the state reserves stand at about RM3 billion, the highest in Sabah's history.

Despite his excellent socio-economic transformation of Sabah, Musa has always kept a low profile. He does not believe in blowing his own trumpet. Rather he lets the results speak for him.

He has been crisscrossing the state bringing infrastructure development to the rural as well as urban areas to eradicate poverty by building low-cost houses and giving the people land under a communal title to cultivate oil palms and rubber so that they can have a wealthy and comfortable life.

And he has been busy attracting investors from the US, South Korea, Europe and Singapore to set up industries in Sabah. Even the Singapore Foreign Minister, George Yeo, was so impressed with Musa that he visited Sabah twice in a year to express Singaporeans' keenness to invest in the industrial development of Sabah.

Musa's job is not completed. In the words of Mustapha Mohamed, the minister of

international trade and industry, the hefty foreign investments in industrial projects, including the RM5.4 billion solar panel project, are due to Musa's excellent management of the Sabah economy.

Chief ministers before him only knew how to spend money. The most startling was during Harris Salleh's tenure. He was good at building multi-billion ringgit grandiose projects that brought the state to the brink of bankruptcy.

So much so that Sabah did not have the money to administer Labuan which Harris happily gave to the federal government without asking for any compensation for the cession.

In contrast, Musa is good in making money for Sabah through his sound 'halatuju' development framework that benefits every Sabahan.

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