

Country to enjoy six per cent growth, says PM

NST - 4/6/2006

KUALA LUMPUR: The economy is expected to grow by six per cent this year, compared with 5.3 per cent in 2005.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday the target was possible with the economy bolstered by commendable performance in various sectors.

Abdullah said growth in the manufacturing, services and agricultural sectors had helped the country achieve 5.3 per cent growth in the first quarter of the year, compared with 5.2 per cent in the fourth quarter last year.

However, he said, inflation had risen as a result of increases in the price of goods, following the recent fuel price hike.

"The Government will regularly control the inflation rate so as not to burden the people too much," Abdullah said during the official birthday celebration of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin at Istana Negara, here yesterday.

"The inflation rate for the second half of this year is expected to be moderate, with an average of 3.5 to four per cent for the whole of 2006."

Abdullah, who is also Finance Minister, said improving the people's standard of living and maintaining peace, security and harmony were important agendas of the Government.

On the objectives of Vision 2020, Abdullah said the effort was fraught with challenges, given the local and international socio-economic scenes.

"The next 15 years require determination and commitment to achieve the set goals and objectives."

Abdullah said human capital was the key to the country's suc-

cess, with the need to explore new sources such as biotechnology, information and communications technology, and skill-based services.

"The Government will improve the education system, starting with pre-school up to the tertiary level. Malaysians must equip themselves with knowledge and skills."

However, the country would not be able to progress if it depended only on the initiatives of its rulers and administrators without the support of the people, Abdullah added. — Bernama