

Abdullah's Beyond 2020 mission 'brilliant'

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■ By V. Vasudevan,
June Ramli and
Sonia Ramachandran
news@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Brilliant, relevant and sensible.

That was how politicians, the business community and scholars described Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's national mission for Malaysians to think beyond 2020.

Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) executive director Stewart J. Forbes said it was reasonable to look beyond 2020.

Abdullah listed the national mission, which plots the road ahead for the next 50 years for the country, as high on his list of priorities.

In a recorded speech at an Umno information machinery gathering at Putra World Trade Centre, which was aired by RTM on Wednesday night, Abdullah said he had not forgotten about Vision 2020. However, it was time to plan ahead for the next 50 years to achieve "century goals" for the country.

Concurring with Abdullah's statement, Forbes said it was sensible and relevant. "We've got a number of plans going through now, like the Ninth Malaysia Plan, which is a five-year plan, and the Third Industrial Master Plan, which is a medium-term plan.

"A lot of the things that we are doing, and the government is doing, will have its effect further down the track. For example, the dividends of revamping the education system will only be seen by 2015 or 2020," he told the *New Straits Times*.

The important thing was to plan for the future by acting now.

"We are very interested in adding investments to Malaysia and we want companies to come in. If the investments come in, they will have long-term impact.

"A lot of the things done now will only be relevant 20 to 15 years down the road, so Abdullah's statement has a lot of relevance."

British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce chief executive officer Ramesh Menon said to grow and remain competitive, one had to think far ahead.

"Vision 2020 brought us this far. We now need to focus on what is required to be done to continue to grow and remain competitive.

"Looking beyond Vision 2020 is an economic necessity."

Ramesh added that the tenets of Vision 2020 could be incorporated into the new "50 Year Plan".

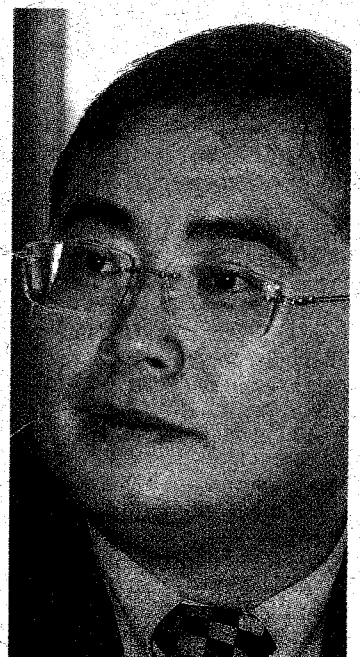
"Putting into place initiatives to make Malaysia an economic force in the global arena in 50 years requires us to plan now," said



MICCI executive director Stewart J. Forbes says the important thing is to act now



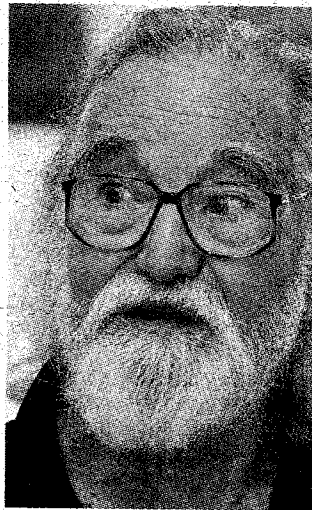
MAICCI president Pardip Kumar Kukreja says the way forward is to start thinking as Malaysians



Ayer Hitam MP Dr Wee Ka Siong feels solidarity should be the focus beyond 2020

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Ungku Aziz
Royal Professor



Ramesh.

Eminent scholar Royal Professor Ungku Aziz said "people should be free to see into any future they like.

"It's the logic of how you get there, that is the question. The future is the one thing that's free. You have to pay for water and electricity, but this is free.

"To me, if you look at 2010 itself, it is marvellous as you can predict the future."

Malaysian Associated Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MAICCI) president Pardip Kumar Kukreja, in congratulating the prime minister on his statement, described it as brilliant, as not everything should be just about 2020.

"The brilliance of this statement

is that not many people saw this point of view. For him to see this point of view is a reflection of his vision and depth of thinking."

Pardip also praised Abdullah for saying it was necessary to be fair and just when it came to non-Bumiputeras as it would otherwise lead to a loss of credibility.

"If justice is to be served to us, then it must also be served to others. It cannot be one-sided. That's a very good point he made."

Pardip added that the country's wealth should be shared and assistance given on a need basis, rather than a race basis.

The way forward for the country, said Pardip, was to start thinking as Malaysians, rather than as Malays, Chinese or Indians.

"That is our strength. Our

weakness is when we start thinking along race lines as that will divide the nation," he said.

At Parliament, Bintulu MP Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing told the *New Straits Times* that the time to think beyond 2020 was now.

"We will have a new generation with a new set of aspirations. What are we going to give them by way of purpose and mission? The prime minister is right and we have to state our mission clearly."

Dr Wee Ka Siong (BN-Ayer Hitam) said beyond 2020, the country should think about solidarity.

"We are working on it now but we have to think of strengthening it further. Whatever we have achieved now is superficial. I believe this is something which needs working on."

Hasni Mohammad (BN-Pontian) said Abdullah's call was appropriate.

"We have most of the infrastructure associated with a developed country in place and we should start thinking beyond that."

Hasni said among the things Malaysia could do was apply its mind to addressing issues like global warming, which up to now had been neglected.

Datuk Baharum Mohamed (BN-Sekijang) said it was a brilliant idea and Malaysians should think beyond the Vision 2020 mark.

His views were also echoed by Datuk Abu Bakar Taib (BN-Langkawi).

"We must increase our target to ensure that the nation is always progressing. What is wrong if we look beyond Vision 2020?" he asked.