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Malaysia's rankings up

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PM: Improved economic performance and government efficiency

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia improved its rankings in government efficiency and world competitiveness last year compared with eight years ago, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Prime Minister, quoting statistics obtained by the World Competitiveness Yearbook released by the Swiss-based IMD (one of the world's leading business schools), said Malaysia's economic performance last year was sixth in the world.

The ratings, of countries with a population of more than 20 million, also put Malaysia as the world's 19th leading trading nation.

In terms of government efficiency, Abdullah said Malaysia was ranked sixth last year, up from eighth in 2000.

"We ranked better than Britain, Germany, Thailand, Spain, Japan, Russia and France. Not bad, huh?" he noted, adding, however, that China, Canada, the United States, India and Taiwan fared better than Malaysia.

Malaysia's business efficiency was "especially good", he said, with the ranking climbing to fourth from 13th last year. The country's infrastructure ranked 10th in the world compared to 13th in 2000, he told 8,000 civil servants at the 8th Civil Servants' Premier Gathering at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday.

Abdullah said Malaysia's world

competitiveness ranking improved to the eighth position last year from 10th in 2000.

He said the seven countries which did better were the United States, Canada, Australia, China, Germany, Taiwan and Britain.

Saying "Malaysia Boleh," Abdullah said Malaysians should improve in their work and perform even better than last year.

On hardcore poor families, Abdullah said the percentage dropped to 0.7% last year from 1.2% in 2004, according to initial statistics from the Economic Planning Unit's household income survey last year.

He said this was an indication that the Government's plan to eradicate hardcore poverty would be achieved sooner than the target year of 2010.

The remaining hardcore poor families in the country must be identified and given help, he said.

"It is our objective and responsibility to achieve zero hardcore poor in the country by 2010," he said.

Abdullah said the ratio of income between rural and urban areas dropped from 1:2.11 in 2004 to 1:1.99 last year.

Abdullah said that the income gap among the three races had also narrowed.

"The income ration between the bumiputras and the Chinese dropped from 1:1.64 in 2004 to 1:1.52 last year while that between the bumiputras and the Indians fell from 1:1.27 to 1:1.23," he said, adding that the ratio between Indians and Chinese dropped from 1:1.28 to 1:1.23.