

# Muhyiddin: Malaysia must quickly restructure its development

**MALAYSIA** must quickly recompose itself and be in a firm position to march towards development, said former Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Muhyiddin, who is the chairman of the National Recovery Council, said Malaysia needs to move from a reactionary stance to one that is proactive and progressively seeking ways to put the country on a more competitive footing.

He added that the country must double its efforts to ensure that Malaysians have the right skill sets and talent pool available not only to serve present day needs, but also in anticipation of the needs of future business environment.

"Much change has happened to the business environment in consumer patterns and supply-chains, which have been intensified even quicker with growing digitalisation due to the pandemic and businesses attempting to find a competitive edge.

"While there will be advice from the government and private sector experts on how to weather this storm, true recovery comes from the human ability to innovate and to seek out solutions," he said in his keynote address at the Malaysia Economic and Strategic Outlook Forum 2022 orga-

nised by KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific yesterday.

Muhyiddin also noted that it is important to acknowledge the rise of the digital economy, hence the transformation needs to take place now to avoid the risk of being left behind, especially by neighbouring countries and beyond the region.

He emphasised that Malaysians must not be too comfortable by taking things for granted and without change, the country risks investors seeking better opportunities elsewhere.

"We must remember that the game has not changed. The business environment has always been dynamic and is never constant.

"As always, those who come (out) on top are those who are able to see the bigger picture, willing to adapt, find gaps in the market and offer unique improved propositions to consumers."

Muhyiddin also said being up-to-date in the digital economy is merely a basic requirement that will allow businesses to compete on a level playing field, especially in an increasingly interconnected world.

However, he said knowing of change, being up-to-date and being resilient on its own are insufficient as the road to recovery

lies within each individual. Thus, he said everyone must be confident to reach a higher goal.

Additionally, Muhyiddin stressed that more needs to be done to encourage foreign investment from other countries into Malaysia and likewise, Malaysia to other countries in pursuit of untapped wealth potential.

He noted that despite the difficulties faced last year with the continued fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysia has remained an attractive destination for investment.

"The country has seen a total of RM177.8 billion in manufacturing, services, and primary sectors in the first three quarters of 2021.

"It is notable that this is an impressive 51.5% increase compared to the same period in 2020 and is expected to generate 79,899 jobs."

Muhyiddin also pointed out that the biggest progress was experienced by the manufacturing sector, which saw an increase of 58.4% or RM103.9 billion from the previous year, followed by 32.5% or RM57.8 billion in the services sector, and the primary sector with 9.1% or RM16.1 billion.

"60% of approved investments consisted of foreign direct investments (FDIs) which

are valued at RM106.1 billion.

"It is interesting to note that Singapore, China, Austria, Japan and the Netherlands make up 85.3% of these total approved FDIs."

On a separate matter, Muhyiddin said the recent flood catastrophe is evidence of the worsening effects of climate change.

Therefore, Malaysia must act immediately and adhere to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 13 which is to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

He said evidently, there is a huge cost not only to individuals, but to the nation, affecting its economic progress and development.

"Relating to this, I would also like to implore delegates of this forum to implement environment, social, and governance standards as a regular part of your business operations and at every level of the organisation.

"However, the adoption of these practises must be voluntary if one hopes to see genuine results.

"This way, alongside caring for the environment, best practice in governance and at the same time caring for our fellow man will serve as a more 'human' factor as we go about our day-to-day routine, making it more purposeful." — *by S BIRRUNTHA*