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King: Be thankful for rapid economic growth

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar today said Malaysia's economic strength has enabled it to withstand external pressures.

In his speech at the investiture ceremony at the Istana Negara in conjunction with his 75th birthday, the King said Malaysians should be thankful as there were some developing countries which were still not totally free.

"A few countries, although independent, were still not economically and politically free due to their weak economy and other problems such as ethnic violence and civil wars.

"As such, I am thankful as our country has successfully entered the globalisation era with full confidence," he said.

He was grateful to God as the country's rapid development had been followed by a rise in the standard of living and the spiritual development of the people.

"This rapid economic development is very meaningful because without it, the country would not have been able to elevate its image as a respected developing and Islamic country," he said.

The King also said the country's success in the 21st century depended on its ability in harnessing its human resources.

"With the world's economy becoming more free, the people need to handle challenges intelligently by utilising the benefits of information technology to develop oneself, and subsequently, the country.

"Investment in research and development should be increased to quicken the country's development," he said.

He added that the people should make use of opportunities available to master computers and other multimedia tools so that they would benefit from the developments of information technology.

The people, he said, could not run away from information technology because it would influence everyone's way of life.

"If there are no attempts to master computers, I am worried some would be left behind in the world of information technology," he said, adding that he hoped all Malaysians would give their support to the Government's move to make the country advanced in the IT arena.

He also said among the challenges of Vision 2020 was to create a new generation which was ethical, caring and with high morals, besides maintaining rapid development.

The new generation should also be able to do away with foul play and corruption, he said.

To Malaysian climbers who reached the summit of Mount Everest at the end of last month, the King said their achievement clearly showed the "Malaysia Boleh" spirit which should be encouraged among the youth in the country.

The King also congratulated Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on receiving the Jawaharlal Nehru Award, the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam and the Order of Good Hope Class One Grand Cross from South Africa.

"This shows the world has recognised Dr Mahathir's contributions as a political leader who dares to speak out for the sake of the nation," he said, adding that he was impressed by Dr Mahathir's statesmanship while attending the First Southern Africa International Dialogue.

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