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`Grab IAP's offer of assistance'

Patvinder Singh; M. Sahibullah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Malaysians to make use of the offer of assistance by the Multimedia Super Corridor's International Advisory Panel to help them master information technology.

He said they should avail themselves of the assistance and not take the offer as something normal that anybody could make.

"Not everyone can give and not everyone is interested to give. When someone is interested to give we should be grateful and thankful. Then we can overcome many challenges that come our way," the Prime Minister said when opening KUB Malaysia Bhd's new headquarters - KUB.com - in Jalan Yap Kwan Seng here.

At the function, Dr Mahathir singled out Dr John Gage, chief researcher and director of Sun Microsystems Inc, who was present as one who had given an assurance to help the country improve its ability in information technology and the K-economy (knowledge-economy).

"This is an assurance which is given seriously and sincerely and we are lucky there are people like him who do not want to ruin us but rather help us," Dr Mahathir said.

He said that he was happy that there were people who were sincere in helping the country.

Dr Mahathir said that during his recent trip to the United States, he observed new ways of doing business using computers and the Internet.

On his return, he said, he heard the opinions of IAP members who comprised of executives of world-renowned IT companies on the new world economy and the business opportunities available.

"Those who do not master these ways would be left behind. It worries me that we will be left behind.

"But what worries me more is that there are Bumiputeras who are very far behind in this field. They are of the opinion that their future is guaranteed and having this new knowledge would not bring any benefit to them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if Bumiputeras did not give time and thought to the new ways then they would become backward.

"We cannot be competitive with other races, and in the modern world, borders cannot protect us from people who are cleverer and more competent in this e-economy," he said, adding that knowledge was important to avoid being scorned.

On KUB, he said, the company was very different from when it was first established, when the hope was to collect money, especially from Bumiputeras, to acquire shares in companies.

However, Dr Mahathir said, the company was politicised to enhance certain people's own political interests which led to its decline.

He said through the prudent management of its chairman and chief executive officer Datuk Hassan Harun the company was turned around.

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