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Agong-Productivity

BOOST PRODUCTIVITY TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMY, SAYS KING

KUALA LUMPUR, June 6 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail has advised the people to continue to improve productivity to make the country's economy stronger and more competitive.

He said this was important as the country's economy had been affected by the Iraq war and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak.

"The Iraq war has affected the export sector. Although the situation has begun to ease, several quarters in the private sector are still feeling the effects of the war," he said in his birthday speech, which was aired by RTM tonight.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin believed that Malaysians were ready to respond to the challenge by taking suitable measures to overcome the negative effects of SARS on the economy.

"Apart from this, the people should also maintain cleanliness and heed the government's advice in efforts to check SARS in our country," he said.

He said the country had shown its ability to grow again after the 1998 economic crisis by adopting various strategies and stimulus measures for economic growth.

"However, the effects of a weak global economy have made it difficult for the country to achieve high growth," he said.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin also praised the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, saying his commitment, dedication and excellent service had brought the country to a level of development the people could be proud of.

He also advised the people to keep abreast of developments around them, especially in facing the era of globalisation and liberalisation.

Globalisation and technological developments were happening rapidly and they could not be avoided, he said.

"Apart from the benefits gained, there are also negative effects to be addressed. Therefore, I would like to urge the people to follow these developments and to equip themselves to face the positive and negative changes resolutely so that they would not be left behind," he said.

He also called for the stepping up of research activities, especially in science and technology, to help realise the country's objective of becoming an industrialised country to compete with other developed nations.

"I am proud of the government's efforts to ensure that the people are given equitable opportunities to get services provided by the government in all fields, including education, economy and housing, health and the like," he said.

He said the government's efforts to distribute the country's riches in the fairest manner possible were consistent with the principles of democracy and justice.

The people should continue to support and cooperate with the government in its efforts to ensure the well-being of the people irrespective of their race, religion, sex and place of origin, he said.

-- BERNAMA

MUN KHY YBY