

PM displayed sincerity on controversial subjects

I am writing this letter after watching the TV programme entitled "Conversation with the Prime Minister" and wish to share my reactions.

To begin with, let me state that I was very impressed with the confident manner in which the Prime Minister handled some of the more controversial questions and especially with the sense of sincerity, dedication and commitment he conveyed in his answers.

This was perhaps the first time that a Malaysian Prime Minister had appeared on TV to discuss Government policy matters.

Moreover, it is not usual for an incumbent Prime Minister (especially a non-economist) to face a panel of experts in a live TV programme answering questions pertaining to policy

matters that involve details which normally are dealt with by professional bureaucrats in the respective Ministries.

I therefore wish to congratulate those responsible for making this event possible and to say how much I personally enjoyed and indeed benefitted from the programme.

(In fact, because of the range of topics covered and the kinds of details in terms of facts and future plans involved, I am taking steps to have a video copy of the interview placed in the library of the college to which I am attached for the reference of students especially those sitting for external degree programmes through the College.)

Having said this, however, it needs to be pointed out that the scenario of the en-

tire interview was limited in scope in so far as it dealt with an analysis of the existing economic situation and the kinds of inputs, concerns and constraints that have contributed to the state of the economy and political stability we have today. To this extent the projections of future developments were also based on this "given situation."

The Prime Minister therefore was on familiar turf since it is well known that he spearheaded the overall economic development and especially the industrial plans with which the panel dealt.

The panel members themselves, perhaps with the exception of Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, were unable to take this opportunity to focus on the rather more controversial and to some extent contradictory as-

pects of policies and programmes.

Above all, the discussion was seriously limited in that it failed to consider the likely social implications and impact of some of the programmes and plans in terms of values and the meaning of development for the quality of life and for human happiness in both the short and long term.

Nonetheless, I wish to reiterate that the discussion generated a lively and educational programme.

Obviously, the Prime Minister has struck a very warm note in the hearts and minds of the viewers and perhaps he may wish to repeat his performance again this time hopefully with a sociologist and political scientist as well on the panel!

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