

31/07/1998

Dr M's book 'The Way Forward' launched here

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's book The Way Forward - a 133-page hardcover containing a series of essays by the Prime Minister on the reasons for the formulation of the New Economic Policy and its success - was launched today.

The book had also been launched in London on July 8 by former British Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher. It is retailing in the United Kingdom at STG16.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who launched The Way Forward at the Putra World Trade Centre, urged all Malaysians to read the book as it addressed the rationale and necessity for the NEP as well as the future direction of the country.

"Whatever the views of others, to us, the NEP has provided political and social stability and this has been tested through time.

"The NEP has fundamentally changed the preconceptions of Malays, and others of the Malays, especially in terms of their involvement in business, education, medicine and technology.

"The policy has shown that success need not be achieved through unbridled meritocracy, as this is not the only path for nation building.

"Rather it is the stress on meritocracy and excellence, tempered with social engineering that could provide a much more sustainable development in a multiracial society," Najib said in his speech.

The book, published by UK-based publisher Weidenfeld & Nicolson, is available at bookstores at RM68.80. Times Publishing Group is the sole distributor for Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

Najib described the Prime Minister as a "transformational leader" - with the ability to move society and a nation to a greater plane.

"Dr Mahathir is someone who has transformed the Malay mentality, the Malaysian mentality and the Asian mentality, resulting in successes of the Malays, the Malaysians and the Asians."

He said The Way Forward was Dr Mahathir's second monumental book, after The Malay Dilemma, which "opened the closed minds of many".

"To a large extent, it led to the birth of the New Malay, certainly decades before this term gained popularity."

On the current economic problems, Najib said no one was more determined to make the country "rise again like a phoenix" than Dr Mahathir.

"This is amply shown by his single-minded approach to his work, persuading, cajoling and converting self-doubters and sceptics that we are on the right track.

"His unconventional views have now become mainstream thinking."

As we approach the last year of the current millennium, Najib said it was unfortunate that "we are moving forward from a weakened position."

"However, with Dr Mahathir at the helm to see us through, it is reassuring that our future is in safe hands."

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