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Dr M a true Asian statesman: Abdullah

Kamarul Yunus

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is a shining example of an Asian statesman and a firm believer in Asia, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Dr Mahathir should be recognised as having greatly contributed to Asia's "coming of age".

"He (Dr Mahathir) fought against the odds and has prevailed. His tenacity and perseverance are his greatest assets.

"This is really due to his firm commitment in his beliefs. Dr Mahathir is undeniably a shining example of an Asian statesman, someone who has risen beyond the norm and has excelled.

"I believe he is a firm believer in Asia and its ability to become a great continent again," he said at the launching of the Prime Minister's book titled "A New Deal For Asia" in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

Once argued as the centre of the world, Abdullah said Asia's strength has waned and eroded over the centuries.

"We are all aware of the great epoch of Asia over the last centuries. Everyone used to look towards Asia," he said.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir is committed to giving Asia the necessary push and encouragement to reclaim its destiny.

In this respect, he said the book is a manifestation of the Prime Minister's strong belief in Asia's potential capacity.

Abdullah said the book would give a "sense of direction" to Asia at a time when the region is undergoing tremendous challenges.

Comparing Dr Mahathir's book to former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" of the 1930s, Abdullah said Asia must seize the opportunity and be willing to be bold and brave and make that commitment.

"In this respect, it is worth for all of us to emulate the Prime Minister's resolve and firm commitment to change Asia. The time has come for all of us to stand with the Prime Minister and take that first step which would surely lead to a giant step ahead for Asia and the world."

In the book, Dr Mahathir makes known his dismay at rogue currency traders who wreaked havoc on Asian economies in 1997 and 1998. It also provides an insight into one of the world's leading statesmen and great thinkers, commenting on various contemporary issues with relative ease. Published by Pelanduk Publications Sdn Bhd, the softcover 155-page edition is priced at RM25 a copy.

Meanwhile, Pelanduk Publications managing director Datuk Ng Tieh Chuan said 10,000 copies have been printed and another 18,000 copies in the Japanese language are expected to be launched in Tokyo on June 3.

Ng said the company will also re-launch the Prime Minister's previous book titled "The Way Forward", which is translated in Bahasa Malaysia, next month.

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