

16/03/2001

Dr Mahathir's currency crisis book a 'must read' for all

S. Gimán

I CAME across a book by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, recently at a bookstore at the Penang airport entitled The Malaysian Currency Crisis - How and Why it Happened, released by Pelanduk Publications. There is also a Malay version of the book released at the same time.

I have read the book and would like to commend Pelanduk and Dr Mahathir for finally coming out with an analysis of the crisis.

It is a good book and Dr Mahathir, in his usual style, gives the public factual information and a rational description from a "first hand" point of view. It can be easily comprehended by the layman who wants to understand how and why the crisis happened.

After reading the book, I can't help but recommend it to friends and feel compelled to write about it. The book will prove insightful and informative to anyone who wishes to understand what actually took place and what the Malaysian Government did to overcome the crisis.

It was written, to my mind, to give the right and fair information during the crisis period. At the same time I would like to encourage all Malaysians from all walks of life to make an effort to read the book to get a better understanding of what had happened instead of getting the information only from foreign magazines and opposition websites and dailies which, I found out, most of the time only try to paint the worst case scenario without facts and add spice to stories with sensational and emotional undertones.

I would also like to propose to the major local daily newspapers that this book be serialised on a weekly or daily basis so that everyone from all walks of life in Malaysia can have access to reading it.

In my opinion, the book recognises the hardship and the difficulties the Government went through. From the book I realise that what is more important for us, the people, is to know that we have a Government which can think and act wisely and rationally even in desperate times for the good of the nation. This should always be one of the criteria for good governance for any party that wishes to lead the nation in future.

A Government without credible leaders that only wishes to set fire to emotions without rational thinking should never be allowed to rule. Recently, there is even talk of daily demonstrations as a way to lead the country - imagine that?

Reading the book and understanding the crisis only reinforces my belief that there are more serious matters that we should worry about as a nation instead of demonstrating. What kind of future leaders are we encouraging if we condone such a short-sighted idea?

And to think this is coming from individuals who claim to be leaders who uphold justice and freedom... To make things worse, they even do it in the name of religion. I would seriously doubt any of these "leaders" to act wisely in times of crisis in future.

As Malaysians, we must learn to unlearn and reading the book I strongly believe will at least shed some light on their doubts. Do not succumb to hate and biased rhetorical views from anyone but, instead, with an open mind, try to read and learn something. I say this with conviction because most times nowadays I see people who would rather stick to rhetoric instead of facts and using that as a basis for unfounded opinion.