



Towards the 21st Century

by

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IN THIS WEEK'S HRI-POST CO-OPERATION COLUMN, Dr. Chira reflects on the fragility of human life and contrasts Malaysia's stability with Thailand's uncertainty.

Last week, thanks to CNN, I was able to witness the explosion at the Federal Building in Oklahoma with my own eyes. And before I say anything more, I would like to extend my condolences to all the families of the dead.

I studied in the United States for 7 years, and it became like a second home to me. Therefore, I feel particularly sad about this 'human tragedy'. Whatever the cause of it, everybody should take this opportunity to reflect on their own life. Life is a risky business, and no-one knows what will happen. So do the best you can while you have the opportunity.

I also want to express my sorrow to the family of Dr. Pipat Pithyachariyakul, a very brilliant finance academic at Thammasat who passed away at the age of just 46. If you wish to make full use of your energy and wisdom, you must take care of your health. Life is so precious.

Dr. Pipat was a new breed of brilliant man, and they say that brilliant men also have their dark side about which few people know. In this case it seems that even Dr. Pipat didn't know. He just continued to work very hard to achieve his success. He was involved in several projects with HRI, including improving the organisation of a number of state enterprises. He never failed to deliver an excellent product, but perhaps sometimes he worked so hard that he forgot to look after his health.

The lesson we should learn is to ask ourselves what we want in life. Buddhism teaches us to follow the middle path, and not to go to extremes. Personally, my philosophy is to do the work I like, do it well, and be happy in what I do. My goal is sustainable happiness, and to make some contribution to the world through my work.

So much for the sadness this week. Let's move on to other areas. I would like to congratulate Dr. Mahathir Mohamad on his victory in the Malaysian election. His United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) party actually achieved more than expected, gaining 162 parliamentary seats to the opposition's 92. The political system in Malaysia is very stable, and that is what the people can look forward to.

Mr. Mahathir himself is responsible for turning Malaysia into an international player. By the time his 20/20 vision is fully developed, the country will have a per capita income of US\$16,000. It is an ambitious and brilliant way for Malaysia to motivate people to feel proud about their country. I think countries which have visionary leaders will have more advantages in the future, because global political and economic systems will be the key to capitalising on the opportunities.

Looking at our own political system, we see uncertainty and may wonder what will happen next month, or next year. No-one really knows. In the past we could still rely on our strong and able bureaucracy to supplement the weakness of our politicians, but this may no longer be true.

So can the private sector play a wider role in order to supplement the capabilities of government? I think they can, but only partially. The rest is up to academics, NGOs and the media. All these elements are crucial. At least HRI/POST Co-operation is doing as much as it can, and we are counting on your continued support for our efforts.

Finally, this week our interview addresses the new developments taking place in Thailand relation to consultants who have the expertise to help companies achieve excellence with their human resources. It seems likely that the world renowned Hay Group will soon set up an office in Thailand. The interview shows just how interesting and challenging this arena is becoming. I'm sure our readers will find this edition of HRI/POST Co-operation, and part II which follows next week, very useful indeed.

See you next week!

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