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+MALAYSIA'S VISION 2020 BECKONS+

By Ahmad Zukiman Zain

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P. J. M.

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KUALA LUMPUR: Here and there, people talk about it. In offices, coffeeshops, bus and taxi stations, over radio and television. In all sorts of places.

Be it a cabinet minister or his driver, newspaper vendor, sundry shopkeeper, a teacher and his students, workers in both government and the private sector, housewives even -- +2020+ is on their lips.

Some have gone to the extent of seeking to have that number for their car or motorcycle registration. Among them are those hoping to get the registration number WDM 2020 because it can stand for +Wawasan Dr Mahathir 2020+ (Dr Mahathir's Vision 2020).

What IS that vision? The ready answer is that it is for Malaysia to be a developed country by that year.

But how? Is it really necessary for Malaysia to reach that status? As many questions arise as the contentions that are flowing thick and fast regarding this +Vision 2020.+ -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 2 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

To many people, this vision is yet another brainwave of the Prime Minister and his team to motivate the people towards further development.

Since Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad assumed the helm of the nation almost 10 years ago -- July 16, 1981, to be exact -- Malaysians have been exhorted to work hard towards progress through such programmes as the Look East Policy, Leadership by Example, Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy Administration and Malaysia Incorporated.

This latest strategy has won widespread approval and acceptance but, as always, there are the detractors who attempt to dismiss it as just a pipe dream, not destined to see the light of day.

These people have conveniently forgotten how those who mocked the National Car project have had to eat their words when the Proton Saga began to notch impressive sales in both domestic and export markets.

+In fact, this Vision 2020 was not created out of thin air; there was a deliberate and collective effort by all of us in drawing it up, + Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said when explaining the matter to a gathering of people of all levels of society in Seremban recently. -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 3 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

The vision represents a joint endeavour by every Malaysian because they collectively decide whether it is realised or turns out to be abortive. It cannot be the sole responsibility of an individual or government.

The path to be taken to accomplish this ambitious venture has already been laid through the people's ability to administer the nation, establish racial unity and set a rapid pace of development within such a short period, 34 years of independence.

These capabilities have proven to be so much better and more effective than those of the colonialists during the hundreds of years they dominated this land.

This is the point the Prime Minister stresses at gatherings where he meets the rakyat at kampungs and towns and impresses upon them that they do have the ability to achieve this Vision.

Where he is unable to meet directly with the people, he makes the exhortation through messages in souvenir books for various functions. -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 4 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

+If we do not endeavour to bring progress to ourselves, then we will be oppressed by other people,+ he says. +This is a fact about this world that we cannot dismiss.

+Even now there are attempts to subdue us ... super powers are telling us, don't do this, don't do that, like as if they are still our colonial masters.

+But if Malaysia becomes a developed nation, we will not be oppressed by others ... no one will try to intimidate us then.

+This is why becoming a developed country is important for us, and we can achieve this goal within 30 years, God willing.

+But in going for this goal, it is not a matter of expecting the government to do this or do that ... we all have to co-operate, all sectors, public, private, businessmen, investors, workers, the ordinary folk, farmers ... everybody.+ -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 5 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir frequently emphasises to the people that it is not impossible for a community that is considered to be backward to progress while another that is deemed to be civilised and has vast influence to degenerate and become virtually a nonentity.

What is preposterous is for Malaysians to expect to wake up on the morning of Jan 1, 2020, and find that their country is a developed nation overnight. This is why efforts towards this must begin now, he says.

The basic premise is the confidence of every Malaysian that they can collectively succeed, just as how so many communities elsewhere in the world have built up their countries to become developed nations.

If Japan can rise from the ashes of defeat in the Second World War to become a developed nation, and wield a powerful economic influence all over the world, including the United States -- the nation that defeated it during the war -- then Malaysia can also do likewise.

+We must remember that the Japanese people were just like us at one time,+ he says. +In fact, after World War II the people in Malaya were more prosperous than those in Japan but they are the ones who are more well off now ... not just in terms of wealth and intelligence but in the ability to invent and manufacture things that the West cannot do. -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 6 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

+If the Japanese can gain control of technology, why can't we? In what way are we inferior to the Japanese, is it that they have three eyes, five ears or a head that is much larger than ours, with much more brains? No, they are just like us.+

Japan succeeded because its people possess the spirit, confidence and farsightedness in all that they endeavour.

With its political stability, Malaysia can also become a developed country in its own way and does not have to fit the mould of the 19 countries that are recognised as developed nations.

Being developed does not mean having skyscrapers in Kuala Lumpur and other large towns while the kampung people continue to live in attap huts.

The developed nation Malaysians desire is also not one that grants absolute freedom to the extent that anyone can do anything without caring about society. -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 7 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

Nudity in public, sexual freedom for adolescents and staging riots and demonstrations in pressing for demands as is happening in countries that are said to be developed are not the values Malaysia seeks.

As a developed nation, Malaysia would want to have people who are self-confident and possess various skills and knowledge.

Putting oneself down, as was ingrained among the people during colonial times, will be passe.

Malaysians will be more bold in taking steps towards further successes while ensuring that good values are never sacrificed in these undertakings.

+We must seek success but in a disciplined, orderly, acceptable manner ... not by robbing people, cheating, through get-rich-quick schemes,+ Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir says. +If we resort to all this, we will never succeed.+ -- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 8 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

To him, the attempt to realise Vision 2020 is like the race between the hare and the tortoise. It is better for Malaysians to be like the tortoise and work steadily but surely towards the goal.

Let the developed countries be like the hare and be carried away with what they already have, arrogantly claiming that they are the champions of the world.

Let them close their eyes and go to sleep while Malaysians patiently work on building up the country so that it also becomes a developed one -- in its own way.

+We can achieve this objective ... be confident ... but we must discipline ourselves to work towards this goal,+ says the Prime Minister.

+We have to be far-sighted, not just looking at today, tomorrow or a year ahead but thinking in terms of our children and grandchildren, so that future generations are not humiliated or abused like how we have suffered.+
-- more

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MALAYSIA'S VISION 9 BERNAMA FEATURE (embargo)

Because Malaysians currently lack knowledge and skills, there are those who look down on Malaysia, he says.

+We do not have to be humiliated by anyone any more .. we have to become a society that is firm and strong, respected by the whole world ... this is what is meant by Vision 2020,+ he reiterates.

+This Vision is for all, not just the government, not just for me; I won't even be around in 2020. Someone else will be in my place .. we do not live to hold up the sky. This goal has to be accepted by all, there is no running away from it.

+But we have to work hard even if we are not going to benefit directly from it. Only a greedy person will work for his own interest, only seeking to enjoy the benefits during his own lifetime.

+We have to work for our children and grandchildren, our community of the future ... this is Vision 2020,+ is how he persuades the people during his visits to the length and breadth of the country. -- Bernama

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