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A feat that's not easy to match

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IT is easy for somebody to go around the country to hold political ceramah if the objective is to complain about things supposedly not done or done wrongly by the Government.

Very few places in the country are now inaccessible. The road network is so extensive that there is no longer the distinction between hulu (rural or upstream) and pekan (town).

But building an extensive network of highways and roads has not been as easy as some opposition politicians have made it out to be.

Today, whenever the Government argues that the rapid development of the country would not have been possible without political stability and good management, it will be scoffed at by the opposition. They say they can do better if given a chance by the people. Talk is easy as it is cheap.

But convincing others to lend us the money to build the roads, bridges, dams and irrigation canals, and later to invest in our country, has not been easy.

What is easy is accusing others. Otherwise, how do we justify leaders of a political party that projects itself as an Islamic party branding fellow Muslims kafir (infidels)?

Can these people and their would-be non-Muslim collaborators convince the world that Malaysia will remain an enlightened and tolerant Islamic nation if ever they are in power when they have no qualms about branding fellow Muslims kafir?

Can they convince international lenders and investors to continue funding our economic development?

Can they convince the giants of the information technology age to continue to invest in the Multimedia Super Corridor the way that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been doing since 1997?

Will the doa (prayers) as recited so eloquently in Arabic, the language of the Quran, and in English by the imam of the National Mosque, Pirdaus Ismail, at the official opening of Cyberjaya on Thursday be heard by the giants of information technology if there is no such forward-looking initiative as the MSC?

This is the modern and moderate face of Islam that Malaysia, as a multi-religious and multi-racial nation, should be projecting to the world. Not the Islam that is inward-looking and exclusive.

I must congratulate the imam for the beautifully-crafted and presented doa, which sought Allah's mercy and help not only for the Muslims but for all present at the ceremony.

And to the Multimedia Development Corporation for making the occasion different, brief and sweet.

Our Malaysian sense of respect, as represented by our elaborate protocol and repetitive salutations, can sometimes be stifling and time-consuming.