

## **LETTER | Are we ready for New Malaysia?**

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LETTER | Malaysia is a country that has immense potential, in almost every denominator. It remains a unique motherland with unparalleled special assets and rare tools that offer different dimensions and contributions to global and civilisational progress.

Sadly, or unluckily, these bright assets were drowned by the overwhelming sentiments and perceptions, rightly or wrongly by the populace in light of the systemic and structural weaknesses and diseases plaguing the progressive path of the country.

Endless crises, mismanagement, chronic corruption, power abuse and divisive politicking, among many others, fuelled the cumulated despair and hopelessness that engulf a majority of the society, with many deeming the state of our affairs as one that is beyond salvation barring real overwhelming changes and reforms dictated by the higher senses of the people.

Some have been highly critical, drastic and emotional in framing our future path as a nation as one whose fate is sealed. From our education system to race relations to economic disparity, this segment of the populace has deemed our future to be futile, sensing no potential for real change and reform.

By terming this as a hopeless case for their worthy pursuit and sacrifice, they foresee no viable future or incentivising factor for them in devoting their reciprocal commitment and spirit.

Some, on the other hand, have been highly optimistic and utopian, seeing the best in everything in our current trajectory and bypassing the entrenched loopholes as normal barriers in facing a developing nation, dismissing them as part and parcel of progressive development and comparing to other worse challenges faced by other countries.

As complex and paradoxical juncture as it can be in the concept of democratic social contract and symbiosis between the masses and the governing polity, the ruling institution that gets the mandate, trust and acceptance from the people will be expected to return those mandates in a viable and generally agreed norms and obligations in the spirit of the communal and national good.

The returns expected by the people from their elected institutions where they

have mandated their exchange of trust and recognition, in the form of security assurances, growth and development opportunities and support in progressive openings for their socio-economic and future well-being, are naturally and ideally be in the form of sustainable, responsible and transparent co-dependency.

It is not, in an ideal sense, to be moulded in a spectrum where the people are either being systematically and systemically entrenched in an endless and deep cycle of unsustainable thirst and reliance on the tangible enticements and benefits created by the ruling class strategically and specifically in ensuring a long grip on power and control.

Tantamount to using democracy as a pretext at the outset in justifying the legitimacy and recognition of power, the embedded strategy of capitalising on the system, contextual norms and culture of ingrained dependence by the people on the model and support fusion created to ensure unfettered reliance to this system and thus enabling long power dominance has partly contributed to the start of a long-term systemic decline in a real and progressive chain of reforms and changes.

The true essence of a noble, responsible and forward-looking democratic contract will be for the people to offer their trust and mandate in exchange for a reasonable and responsible execution of duties in supporting the right and

sustainable progressive paths, not a purposefully ingrained structural dependence and enticement in keeping the power and dependency structure that makes the people perpetually tied, either willingly or unwillingly with no grounds to initiate real improvements or change.

Could we have done much better in a much more equipped resource setting if our governance is principle-based and value-driven? Inevitably, yes.

Are we driven to commit our duties as Malaysians and to execute our part and responsibilities as proud citizens only when there are pulling and incentivising factors to do so? Naturally, no.

Good governance and value-driven orientation of a nation should not be at the expense of dwindling participatory populace engagement and affiliation and vice versa.

The progress over more than six decades of independence has been commendable, albeit far greater achievements and progress would have been charted if good governance and a principle-based model are upheld.

Unless real reforms and changes involving people-led drives that bring significance to the reform agenda are initiated, the massive lost opportunities

over the decades will not be mitigated.

Current power bearers find it difficult, politically or otherwise, to see through the real transformative agenda that they realise is critically needed to steer the nation out of the old dogma and doldrums of past trappings.

From now until 2040 at least, conventional trapping with the same leadership barriers and the notion of systemic practices and mindsets will be the main stumbling blocks in unlocking the true assets and potential of the country, barring a seismic shift in people-led readiness and willingness to chart a new path of rejuvenation in the country's political, socio-economic and demographic landscape.

Hope is often pinned on the new generations that will inherit the current challenges and limitations plaguing the country, and while there is real hope of new dynamism and willingness by these new demographic groups to finally do the right thing and right the wrongs, real changes are not successfully derived overnight.

It will need the courage, conviction and sense of visionary purpose born out of pure pride and love for the country and the people to set the agenda forward starting now, jettisoning the poisons and lure of power and money.

The longer the current disease is left untreated, the bigger the demographic and generational divide and resentment that will exist that will further polarise the nation and create a stifling understanding gap between the old and the young.

### **Good governance**

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

Good governance and politics of conscience that are driven by the senses of the masses and morality form the bedrock of maturity and stability. What is politically right cannot be morally wrong, and what is morally right cannot be politically wrong.

It gives credence to the new era of governance that is based on justice, integrity, accountability, transparency, rule of law, pivoting away from racial divide and polarisation, and politics of conscience.

It also reinforces the tenacity of the people in upholding democratic justice and exchange of reciprocal trust in protecting the sanctity of the creation of a government of, by and for the people.

It remains every Malaysian's hope and aspiration to play a dutiful and proud role as a citizen of this great country to mould the nation to be a highly regarded nation and a beacon of a modern, progressive, dynamic and mature democracy with a shining example of good governance and policy, backed by solid and independent key institutions in playing a major in global and civilisational progress in the future.

For the new generations to correct the path, they will need the wisdom of the current model and system for a better self-correction setting, sensing the prevailing urgency to stem the plague of past trappings and fixed perspectives.

Future prospects are both exciting and fearful, as new internal and external threats might further derail and weaken the dynamism of the new leaders, albeit being offset by the bright prospects of the country becoming a major player in various parameters in the global order.

Common loyalty and devotion to the king and the country must surpass political considerations, where the country reigns supreme in our future orientations and intentions.

It serves as an apt example of how the people will have new wisdom and foresight to escape past social constructs and trapping and embrace the needs of

the future in creating a meaningful cause for the country.

A cause that is pillared on justice, integrity, accountability, honour, mutual respect and dignity is worth the pursuit, for our great and beloved country will remain forever in our heart and soul.

This 65th Merdeka Day marks our patriotic sacrifice to put our country first, above all.

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