

Adopt Madani values into policies

COMMENT
by Collins Chong Yew Keat

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has created a solid foundation with clear policies to focus on good governance, ethical policymaking and eradicating corruption, among others, sparking a new sense of optimism among the people.

This is meant to send a strong message, both domestically and internationally, acknowledging that while Malaysia is entrenched in a crisis of corruption, abuse of power and social injustices, the new leadership will mark the beginning of the end of these ingrained dogmas.

Although the process will take time and will be painstaking, the prime minister has the clout to see through these agenda for the good of the nation.

Political instability over the past several years has stalled Malaysia's progress, with internal systemic and structural weaknesses further dampening sentiments and affecting prospects of growth and investor confidence.

Under Anwar, a new framework that is holistic has been put in place to right the wrongs, encompassing impactful policymaking to bring tangible economic benefits to all sectors and groups.

Economic transformation and social justice that is principle-laden and value-based, with far-sighted reforms, will set a new course of vision for the country and the people.

Although he will face internal stumbling blocks caused by continuous political manoeuvring touching on race, religion and royalty, he must persevere. There will also be challenges in bridging the various development gaps, inequality and imbalances among the geographical

regions, societal and ethnic groups and religious and racial divide. These issues will need urgent addressing.

He must collectively, with other stakeholders, confront and strategically address these gaps that will threaten to slow progress and limit our true potential in the future. For us to succeed in an integrated, cohesive, inclusive manner, a more concerted effort and political will are needed to break barriers, one that transcends boundaries in the clarion call for a national purpose.

The Malaysia Madani concept spells a new chapter for our nation, with reality based development. It represents a bold, new intent to elevate Malaysia's standing, profile and image and is different from previous leadership slogans and mantra - in that it is not tied to populist approach or with higher political returns.

The concept is intended to create a new culture and mindset, with a new push for Malaysia's reform agenda. However, the focus must be on equitable economic growth and sustainable wealth distribution, not to mention good governance, accountability, responsibility and integrity.

A team effort will be required to wage an all-out assault against corruption, abuse of power and funds, leaks and wastages. This will be a thorny affair for Anwar, and he will need to harness all his skills acquired over the years to resolve these issues without risking support.

Relations with Asean

The Madani concept should also be relied upon to set a new path to strengthen ties with Asean regional players. It can be elevated and absorbed into the Asean framework to build national and regional resilience and sustainable policymaking.

He will need to find support to bolster security and defensive measures to face

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renewed threats in the region.

Malaysia sees the region as increasingly interconnected, and that any foreign policy of one country will have inevitable knock-on and ripple effects on other regional members, especially in defence and security policies, and economic and trade agenda.

Extra attention is projected to be on growing regional powers, especially Vietnam and Indonesia as Malaysia tries to leverage on the spillover effects and also to enhance mutual returns and benefits.

However, there should not be any significant shift for now as the focus should be on domestic reform, political stability and economic growth.

Malaysia should also strengthen its credentials and leadership in the Muslim and developing world through the Madani platform to advance common values and people-centric strategies for more clarity and depth in the voices of the Muslim world and Global South.

Relations with the West

The Madani concept should also be the central pillar in foreign policy when

dealing with the West and in facing the US-China rivalry, with Malaysia continuing to respect and build strong, bilateral relations with all nations to avert risks of conflicts by promoting dialogue, diplomacy and goodwill.

Malaysia must reaffirm its commitment to uphold human rights, and work to elevate its new image as a reformed state, espousing the principles of justice, social responsibility, democracy and freedom of choice.

Meanwhile, Anwar will need to focus on high quality economic drivers of growth, particularly digital economy, green energy, technological advancement, sustainable resource security, food security, resilient supply chain while empowering small and medium enterprises as the main growth engine.

Issues of environmental concerns, climate change, migrant workers and efforts to draw talents and expertise, will also remain crucial factors in the agenda, with the hope that it will provide a multiplier effect on other sectors.

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