

When a catchy slogan brands a leader

PETALING JAYA: Prime ministers come and go. And so do the snappy slogans that come with each leader.

Taglines such as Wawasan 2020, 1Malaysia, Malaysia Prihatin, Keluarga Malaysia, and now Malaysia Madani are not just punchy but important to present a prime minister's brand and mark their legacy.

The slogans are used to identify a prime minister's policies and political philosophy as well as encapsulate their image or brand, says National Council of Professors senior fellow Datuk Dr Jeniri Amir.

"Every time a new prime minister comes along, he will come up with his own slogan," he said.







So far, no prime minister has chosen to continue with his predecessors' slogans.

The practice of having a slogan or brand for a prime minister began with Datuk Seri (now Tun) Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he launched his Wawasan 2020, which envisioned a Bangsa Malaysia (Malaysian nationality).

His successor, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, had his Islam Hadhari, followed by Datuk Seri Najib Razak's 1Malaysia.

Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's Malaysia Prihatin was the most recent, followed by Datuk Seri Ismail's Sabri's Keluarga Malaysia.

The latest - Datuk Seri Anwar

Concepts introduced by previous prime ministers					
<p>Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad</p>  <p>Bersih, Cekap, Amanah <i>(to create a work ethic that prioritises productivity and work quality among Malaysians)</i></p>	<p>Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi</p>  <p>Islam Hadhari <i>(a comprehensive approach to the development of mankind, society and country, based on the perspective of Islamic teachings and civilisation)</i></p>	<p>Datuk Seri Najib Razak</p>  <p>1 Malaysia: People First, Performance Now <i>(to promote national unity, an eight core values - high performance culture, accuracy, knowledge, innovation, integrity, strong will, loyalty and wisdom)</i></p>	<p>Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad</p>  <p>Malaysia Baharu <i>(an effort to drive Malaysia towards a progressive, visionary and respected nation)</i></p>	<p>Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin</p>  <p>Kerajaan Prihatin <i>(a concept that is people centric and caring as its main guiding principle)</i></p>	<p>Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob</p>  <p>Keluarga Malaysia <i>(a concept that cut across religious, ethnic and racial boundaries and invites Malaysians to come together as a united family)</i></p>

Ibrahim's Malaysia Madani - is very much on-brand with Anwar's Islamic background, identity and philosophy.

"Anwar has chosen a theme similar to that of the Islam Hadhari. Both have Islamic elements," said Dr Jeniri.

He said Anwar's challenge would be to realise his brand effectively, and he would need the media and his communication teams to play

their roles well.

While taglines are an important political marketing tool, they also bring an extra burden on the public purse to promote them, said Universiti Malaya's Prof Dr Awang Azman Awang Pawi.

"For example, the Keluarga Malaysia slogan saw a lot of public spending to promote various related aspects throughout the tenure of the ninth prime minister's (Ismail

Sabri)," he said.

Awang Azman said slogans could leave a lasting and deep impression depending on the length of the prime minister's tenure.

"Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad introduced the Wawasan 2020 concept in 1991. It left a deep impact because he was in power for a very long time, and it was even picked up by his successors to some extent," he said.

Universiti Sains Malaysia professor of political sociology Prof Sivamurugan Pandian said the practice of using slogans was also done in other countries such as India and the United States.

"Slogans are important to set an agenda for any leadership, and the expectation is for others to react in order to understand the way forward, vision and mission through the tenure of any leadership."