

Rescripting Malaysia for better days

MANY catchy slogans have been rolled out under various prime ministers to steer well-meant policies.

Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob conceived the "Keluarga Malaysia" or "Malaysian Family" concept, which replaced Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's "Caring Malaysia" that was conceptualised in response to the Covid-19 prevention exercises that the government undertook under his leadership.

Tun Mahathir Mohamad's return as the seventh prime minister gave us "New Malaysia," to remove any association with the previous government led by Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and his "One Malaysia" slogan.

In this fine tradition, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on Jan 19 unveiled a new slogan, "Malaysia Madani" or "Civil Malaysia." Madani is the Malay acronym for sustainability, care and compassion, respect, innovation, prosperity and trust (Script).

To dismiss flippant remarks by common netizens that this is just another public relation exercise, this vision document opens an empathetic connection to all readers.

The introduction confesses that "there was mismanagement, corruption, cronyism and political battles, divisions and squabbling, which have torn aspects of national unity".

The document underscores the urgent but unattended issues such as Malay poverty, environmental degradation, community cohesion and nation building. "Malaysia Madani" invites all Malaysians to explore the possibility of realising this new vision.

"Malaysia Madani" comprehensively outlines a plan to steer away from creating huge monuments and iconic buildings. It stays clear from esoteric and idealistic ideas but gravitates everyone to recreate the magic Malaysia was once recognised for.

The most important aspect of any progress if it is to be sustained is to unleash a positive culture. Jim Collins in his book *Built to Last* provides evidence that an organisation which focuses on building a culture will outlast those that emphasise only on performance. This was based on research carried out on corporates that lasted more than 100 years.

Anwar clearly states that there is a need to create a positive, healthy and holistic culture, and that the buck after passing from government to government stops with his leadership.

The solid message is that this document clearly moves away from empty promises. "You deserve better than 'just-wait-and-see' or the faithless 'trust us' approach," he said.

Hence, a rescripting is necessary and the acronym Script captures the essence of building



a strong and powerful culture that will give an important thrust in bringing back basic humaneness, while forging us ahead to address impending challenges.

The Industry Revolution 4.0, 3D printing, Internet of Things and the highly sophisticated digitalisation, coupled with robotics has unleashed the creation of seamless platforms connecting everything to everyone.

An inevitable hurricane of changes can be expected, for which Malaysia must be prepared to face. The "Malaysia Madani" solution, however, gives everyone the chance to avoid being swept away by the unavoidable, strong and sudden changes. Instead, by enacting ideals for improved policy changes, people will be given the opportunity to retain the deeply ingrained Malaysian culture of their respective "humanistic transformative selves".

This analogy is better understood if one imagines himself standing in the eye of a hurricane. In the midst of swirling changes, one must feel humaneness, compassion, care and respect that unites everyone, regardless of race and religion, in a shared sense of safety, security and stability.

Anwar at various parts in the document notes that many things need changes, and this rescripting is necessary for a better Malaysia.

The document highlights the ideals for a new wave, which is captured under the acronym Script. Every one of the values have been adequately defined and explained in the text.

Sustainability, innovation and prosperity are drivers for any nation wanting to make a mark in the world.

Often, attributes such as care, compassion and trust are compromised, resulting in unachievable goals.

"Malaysia Madani" gives equal weightage to both components of culture and performance.

Steven Covey said "begin with the end in mind", and rightly so Script begins with the letter "S", which stands for sustainability. Every initiative must have an end goal and be sustainable, moving away from the general attitude of quick, temporary fixes.

The document highlights the fact that we are preparing to usher in the next generation. Living with selfish pursuits without care and compassion will cause great suffering for everyone.

The mission is to rekindle a caring and compassionate society that not only helps the less fortunate, but also tends to the basic needs of others through adequate provisions of social welfare, affordable food, housing and healthcare.

A caring community will support the weak and the marginalised through services and

advocacy. The concept of a caring society will unite people from various socioeconomic backgrounds and revive the "caring society" way of life we once treasured.

The next in Script is respect. The goal is to forge a mutually respectful Malaysian society dedicated to inclusion, equality, integrity and dignity. This will pave the way to a unified nation.

Without innovation, we will be devoid of a good future. The aim is to build a culture of innovation, and take the nation from being primary consumers to being active contributors to the digital and technological revolutions that are changing the globe.

The vision for prosperity is to make the nation affluent through a balanced and sustainable economic growth, empowerment and inclusivity of the citizenry, giving due regard for the spiritual and overall well-being of the people, communities and the nation.

Script ends with Trust. To ensure security and stability, we need trust. The new government made of members from different component parties must trust one another in order to gain each other's respect and trust from the public.

The document spells out the intricate nature and attributes of the new government and the type of leadership every ministry must uphold to regain the trust of the people, who gave them the mandate.

Apart from providing definitions, the document also lays out policy imperatives by taking into account the financial, economical, legal, institutional, educational, social, cultural as well as urban and rural factors.

Most policy documents remain "stillborn" as they are usually impeded by unforeseen complex issues, often going through fluctuating, chaotic situations and uncontrollable future events. Incorporating these components in the document reveals the nobility of the intention, and that the concept has been thoroughly thought through.

It is too early to judge this initiative but it is timely, and the government must ensure that there is a strong will to make this vision a reality.

"Malaysia Madani" outlines everything the nation needs to steer our "ship" to safety, especially with the anticipated global economic upheaval. SCRIPT may be our only saviour to see us through.

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