

Keeping an intact unity govt

Anwar gets credit for fulfilling a very difficult task

KUALA LUMPUR: In his first year as the country's 10th Prime Minister and head of the unity government, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has set a new leadership benchmark amid political and economic challenges, say pundits.

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs and alumni) Prof Dr Mohd Izani Mohd Zain said Anwar's experiences since leading the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (Abim) in the 1970s have shaped his character as the country's top leader.

"He even went down to universities to meet the students through his 'Temu Anwar' programme.

"I think this is a good benchmark for ministers and political leaders because they are not only holding office and making policies, but should also go to the ground and see for themselves the reality of our society.

"The benchmark set by the Prime Minister should be emulated by other ministers," he said in Bernama TV's special programme, *PMX One-Year Anniversary*, yesterday.

Prof Mohd Izani said the good relations established between Anwar and foreign leaders before he even assumed the role of Prime Minister have helped him continue efforts in bilateral cooperation, thereby further strengthening Malaysia's position in international relations and diplomacy.

On the Palestinian issue, the political analyst said Anwar's relationships with foreign leaders have also helped him to boldly voice Malaysia's stance on the international stage, including at the 30th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Economic Leaders' Meeting in the United States and the Extraordinary Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Saudi Arabia recently.

Anwar took his oath of office on Nov 24, 2022, five days after the country's 15th General Election. He then formed a unity government and appointed two deputy



Religious duty: Anwar greeting fellow Muslims during Friday prayers in Putrajaya. - Bernama

prime ministers and 28 members of the new Cabinet.

Another political analyst, Dr Abdul Aziz Azizam, who is Universiti Teknologi Mara senior lecturer in liberal communication at its Communication and Media Studies Faculty, said Anwar faced a very difficult task after his appointment, especially in uniting various political parties in the country with different principles while steering the "government ship".

"I think he has succeeded in creating a stable government within these 12 months.

"The noise of democracy and differences of opinion is normal in democratic governance. At the same time, that is what gives strength to the government when it can handle differences of opinion and clarify the direction of the current administration," he said.

In the economic aspect, Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist and head of social economics and finance Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said one of Anwar's achievements is maintaining the country's economic resilience and competitiveness despite the challenging and unprecedented global economic landscape.

He said this is evident as the economic growth rate remains positive, recording 3.3% in the third quarter of this year, despite various narratives of changes in the global economic landscape and the challenges the government faces in administering the country.

"So I think this is something we can celebrate because positive economic growth is important. When the economy grows in a positive momentum, it means our economy can create jobs, and this

is evident as the country's unemployment rate continues to be on the decline," he said.

Mohd Afzanizam said the presentation of several important documents, including the New Industrial Master Plan (NIMP) 2030, to provide a narrative about the country's economic direction also demonstrates the government's commitment to adapt to the current economic landscape.

This includes taking into account climate change to plan for a more sustainable economic plan, for which various targets have been set.

"Armed with these documents, investors can see the government's seriousness in managing the country's economy. That's from the investors' perspective, but now what is also important is the relationship or communication between the government and the people," he said.