

Abdullah: the remaking of Malaysia

Since he came into office, Prime Minister Dato'Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi has been working patiently, methodically to put in place the building blocks to transform Malaysia into a 'first world' nation. Now, Malaysians are beginning to see what he sees - a vision that is inspiring dreams and aspirations that will propel us forward, again and again, generation after generation.



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PUSTAKA PERDANA



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Moving Malaysia to the next level

It was more than 30 years ago when I first met our Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi.

At that time, he was a Deputy Minister and President of the Malaysian Vocational Guidance Association. I was his Treasurer.

Working with him, I came to know him well.

He was tenacious and very, very determined in everything that he did.

But there was a quality that separated him from many others.

There are determined people who have determination written all over their face and in their body language.

With Dato' Seri Abdullah, you don't see it on the outside.

Nevertheless, the strength in his character is there, clear to those who knew him personally and who worked closely with him.

The steely determination, the warm smile and the soft

approach are all hallmarks of a confident leader whose style is to persuade rather than dictate.

Capacity to build

We know him to be a leader who leads by consensus.

We will agree that consensus is, perhaps, the most difficult method of leadership because consensus is about empowering people. It requires mutual collaboration and cooperation to achieve outcomes that will be to everyone's satisfaction.

Consensus building has been the Prime Minister's approach for over 40 years that he has served with the Government and the Cabinet in various capacities.

Consensus is desirable because consensus enables collective ownership of the results.

The results of what he has achieved in his short term in office are there for everyone to see – the biggest general election landslide victory for his Barisan Nasional coalition in Malaysia's history; a cohesive and united multi-party Cabinet; the 15-year National Mission which is the road map to take the country on the final stretch to the Vision 2020 goals; regional development corridors to rejuvenate the economy, spread development and narrow the wealth gap across the country and pull every region and every

community along on the journey to a better tomorrow; blueprints to transform the education system and produce world class human capital.

The list is long.

In his four-plus years as Prime Minister, we have come to see how very focused he is on pursuing the results that he wants, and we have learnt he has the capacity to build on the results to get him and the country to the next level where he wants to go.

In public as well as in private, Dato' Seri Abdullah often speaks about overcoming disparities, inequalities and sharing, issues that are close to his heart.

He points out that the nation has embraced a shared vision; so it is right and just that everything in the country should be shared equitably.

The corridor development concept is his way to implement what he thinks and how he feels.

Developing the inner landscape

He also speaks a great deal about the quality of people - human capital is how he likes to describe them.

He sees urgency in producing human capital empowered with the right knowledge, skills and attitude to respond effectively to the global challenges and keep our country in

the global competitiveness loop.

It all makes perfect sense.

The leaders who came before him had charged forward to develop the country and upgrade the economy. That was the hard landscape.

We needed the physical infrastructure in our early phases of development - the roads and bridges, the airports and sea-ports, cities and institutions of higher learning.

Now, Dato' Seri Abdullah is moving the country up to a new level of advancement to meet the demands in a new world.

He is paying more attention to developing the inner landscape so it can match the physical landscape.

The mind is where he wants to build and lift.

A country that has 'first world' infrastructure should have people with 'first class' mentality.

To the Prime Minister, building a better Malaysia begins with developing better Malaysians.

Remaking of the Malaysians' mind is the start of the remaking of Malaysia.

Tan Sri Dato' Professor Dr Lim Kok Wing
President,
Limkokwing University of Creative Technology

“Throughout my tenure as Prime Minister, I have spoken repeatedly about the need for ‘cemerlang, gemilang, terbilang’ or ‘excellence, glory, distinction’. This should be our hallmark. This has become the clarion call for Malaysians. I have called on my countrymen to aspire towards achieving consistent and sustainable success. I have reminded Malaysians that excellence is not a destination, but a continuous pursuit of value adding on one’s achievement.”

Dato’ Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi

Building capacity to turn vision to reality

Not long after he took over as the fifth Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi spoke candidly on the issue of political leaders' inclination to focus on personal popularity.

He admitted that popularity is the bread and butter of politicians, but stressed his firm belief that they should not lose sight of their responsibility to do the right thing.

He pointed out that a good leader must look far ahead because what he does today could have an impact in the distant future.

He said, "I have set out to try and do what is right for this country. I have set out to do what I believe is right not just for this generation but for those to follow.

"What is important to me is that what we do today, what we change today will enable us to succeed now and far into the future."

Four years into his premiership, Malaysians have learnt to look

at Dato' Seri Abdullah's aspiration for the country through his eyes. Malaysians are beginning to see what he sees.

And Malaysians are in full agreement with the priorities of this soft-spoken leader who is on a mission to lift this nation to new levels of excellence.

Patently, methodically, the Prime Minister has been pulling together the components of his mission plan to transform Malaysia into a 'first world' nation and Malaysians into a people with a 'first class mentality'.

Characteristically, he named his plan the National Mission. It is a plan meant for every Malaysian.

He wants everyone onboard, to take ownership of the plan - from farmers to bankers, from taxi drivers to business managers.

It is because he believes capacity building has to involve everyone.

Building blocks of National Mission

The National Mission is the most comprehensive and far-reaching national development blueprint ever conceived in the country's history.

A 15-year blueprint to get Malaysia and Malaysians to make a concerted push to achieve the medium-term goal of a developed nation by the year 2020.