

Three Years of the Madani Government: The Reality of Failed Reform

News:

After three years in power, the Madani Government led by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim continues to mark its anniversary with various programmes, conventions, and slogans centred on the narrative of national reform. Yet behind the celebratory tone and the repeated rhetoric of change, the lived reality of the people points to an increasingly undeniable truth: the promised reforms have failed to materialise into genuine structural transformation. The gap between expectation and reality has not narrowed—on the contrary, it has widened.

Comment:

The name “Madani” was branded as a symbol of justice, integrity, and civilisational progress. However, after three years, these approaches have proven to be largely cosmetic, failing to address the root causes of systemic dysfunction.

This failure is most evident in the area of public institutional reform. Promises to strengthen the independence and professionalism of enforcement bodies such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) have not been accompanied by structural changes capable of guaranteeing genuine institutional autonomy. There has been no legal overhaul to sever political influence from enforcement processes, nor the establishment of new mechanisms that meaningfully enhance accountability. Public perception of selective enforcement and politically motivated prosecution remains deeply entrenched, reflecting the reality that corruption and systemic leakages have yet to be decisively addressed.

In the economic sphere, the government frequently highlights low inflation figures as evidence of sound economic management. Yet these official statistics fail to capture the realities of everyday life. The costs of food, housing, transportation, and education continue to rise, placing mounting pressure on B40 and M40 households. For many families, the burden of living costs has forced painful trade-offs, compromising basic needs such as nutrition, healthcare, and children’s education. This situation underscores that the people’s economic hardship is not temporary in nature, but rooted in a fragile economic structure—marked by a shortage of high-income employment opportunities, a widening gap between wages and living costs, and a weak social safety net.

The fragility of this economic structure has direct consequences for social stability. The aspiration to build a values-based Madani society has failed to translate into meaningful social improvement. Rising statistics of out-of-wedlock pregnancies among adolescents serve as a stark indicator of the weakness of education policies, family institutions, and social support systems. Escalating social problems cannot be reduced to individual moral failure alone; they are symptomatic of a systemic failure by the state to address economic pressure, value erosion, and fragmented social policy. Moral rhetoric without comprehensive systemic reform merely obscures the true causes of social breakdown.

At the same time, the agenda to combat corruption and money politics remains highly contested. Despite repeated claims of strong commitment to anti-corruption efforts, public trust continues to erode. Actions perceived as selective—including arrests involving specific political figures—raise serious questions about whether corruption is genuinely being eradicated or merely managed according to political expediency. And in the realm of foreign policy, trade agreements such as the ART with the United States have sparked concern over national economic sovereignty.

Taken together, these realities lead to a conclusion that is difficult to escape: the failure of reform does not stem solely from the individuals in power, but from the democratic-capitalist system itself, which structurally reproduces elitism, corruption, and injustice. Henceforth, genuine transformation cannot be achieved through partial adjustments or cosmetic reform. It can only be realised through the comprehensive implementation of the Islamic system, encompassing governance, economics, education, law, and social organisation, grounded in justice, trust, and accountability. Only by restructuring the system from its roots can corruption and injustice be eradicated in a meaningful way—rather than being superficially managed at the surface. This is the reality that must be confronted if real change is to be achieved, not merely promised.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Dr. Mohammad – Malaysia