

# Navigating ambition, reality in 'Solusi Jokowi'

PRESIDENT Joko Widodo's second term is coming to an end, and I remember being in Jakarta in 2014, preparing for field trips to Central Kalimantan when Jokowi won his first term. There was a sense of optimism and change in the air. I recall buying a book named 'Solusi Jokowi', which outlined his proposals and promises as President-elect.

Time flies, and his time in office is almost up, with less than 1.5 years left.

Jokowi was Indonesia's first head of state to come from neither the political elite nor the military. He started as a furniture maker, then became the mayor of Solo, the governor of Jakarta, and now the president of Indonesia.

His political career was based on his promises to bring new life to the country with fresh ideas to eradicate corruption, overhaul the bureaucracy, upgrade infrastructure, boost economic growth, protect the natural capital, and resolve past human rights violations, among other things.

After being re-elected in 2019, Jokowi during his second inauguration speech reaffirmed his vision of Indonesia becoming a developed nation by 2045 and one of the world's top five economies. He has also expressed his desire to elevate Indonesia's status as a maritime power. However, the President has been facing difficult challenges from competing vested interests throughout his two terms.

Jokowi has presented himself as a nationalist and developmentalist, forming a wide coalition to advance



Handout photo from the Presidential Palace in March 2022 shows Jokowi mixing water and samples of soil from 34 provinces during a 'Kendi Nusantara' ritual in Penajam Paser Utara, as the government prepares to move its capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan. — AFP photo/Presidential Palace

his agenda. His focus on infrastructure has earned him the image of an 'infrastructure' president. Throughout his nine years in office, the President has travelled the country, inaugurating new airports, ports, and bridges. Photos of him wielding a shovel or riding a motorcycle on a new road have almost become a daily occurrence across the nation.

Under Jokowi's leadership, Indonesia has embarked on grand and ambitious development plans for Kalimantan. These plans involve constructing a new capital city, or Ibu Kota Negara (IKN), in East Kalimantan, developing economic corridors, building massive infrastructure projects, and establishing sprawling

industrial parks. The objective is to reduce the concentration of power in Java, stimulate regional economic growth, and create a new capital city that is more sustainable and disaster-resilient. While these projects are commendable, they pose significant challenges. The relocation of the capital city requires substantial investment, infrastructure development, and environmental considerations. The President has been calling on foreign governments and companies to invest in the development of the new capital, but the absence of a comprehensive and overarching vision for the project has made many investors hesitant.

Furthermore, there are widespread concerns regarding

the uncertain political will and support for the Nusantara project after Jokowi's term ends. Since SoftBank Group from Japan withdrew from the project in March, there have been no significant investment commitments made. With increased risk aversion in the investor communities, many remain unconvinced with Nusantara. Despite the limited time frame for obtaining wider public consultation, the IKN law has already been passed and efforts are underway to formalise governance, budget, and planning through legislation. However, allocating funds has proven to be challenging due to competing needs especially from post-Covid recovery.



with Dr. Goh Chun Sheng

Jokowi has made some moves, such as announcing the Nusantara Capital City Authority leadership and declaring that Jakarta will no longer be the capital by 2024, with a concrete date set in August 2024 to move into Nusantara. It appears that the President is keen to push ahead with his plan to reduce the chances of his successor potentially undoing it. However, scepticism and uncertainty remain, and many have openly cast their doubts on the project.

While Jokowi's record in infrastructure has been generally positive at the city level, during his tenure as mayor of Solo and governor of Jakarta, his approach to governance has been relatively less successful at the national level.

As I noted last year, the Nusantara project is a microcosm of Jokowi's second term as President of Indonesia. The approach is characterised by the President's high confidence in decision-making, which may have led the administration to overlook planning and details, resulting in policies that overly focus on short-term political gains and may not be sustainable. It is therefore not surprising for many to maintain a critical perspective regarding Jokowi's aspirations for large-scale infrastructure projects.

As Jokowi steps down in October 2024, uncertainties and risks loom during the transition period. The future of these mega-projects depends on the incoming president and their policies. An Indonesian economist described to me that Jokowi is 'casting a wide net', hoping that some of the policies and projects may survive and become his legacy. However, many may not be retained on a full scale due to limited financial capacity and unfavourable global economic conditions.

The upcoming changes in Indonesia's leadership provide Malaysia with an opportunity to reassess potential collaborations. Malaysia, especially the Bornean region, can capitalise on the strong cultural ties and relationships to establish a closer partnership that benefits both.

Cross-border cooperation in infrastructure development and environmental management can contribute to regional stability and prosperity, but careful decisions need to be made based on a more honest assessment of the situation. Driving change requires more than just imagination and personality. Borneo has come a long way from colonisation to confrontation and collaboration. Both sides may need to raise their game in a careful manner to achieve a sustainable development trajectory.

Dr Goh Chun Sheng is a researcher at Sunway University and Harvard University. He is interested in exploring sustainable development in both Malaysian and Indonesian Borneo.

## Samin committed to being voice of maritime industry players in Sarawak

SIBU: Sarawak Association of Marine Industries (Samin) vows to continue being voice of those involved in this sector.

In stating this, its president Dr Renco Yong said his team was encouraged by positive, tangible results from their active persistence in lobbying to the relevant authorities regarding matters meant to safeguard the interests of its members as well as those of other marine industries.

He said one of their requests was for the Sarawak government to help address the issue of labour shortage in the marine industry.

"We also requested assistance in facilitating our members, namely those operating shipyards who form the majority of the association's membership, with regard to applications for bringing on foreign workers. This request was made in anticipation of the inevitable recovery of the economy, specifically the maritime sector, once the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic was over.

"Our members and players in the shipbuilding and ship repair (SBSR) sector, which relies heavily on foreign workers, fear about not being able to accept orders for new (maintenance, repair and overhaul) works if they did not have adequate manpower to carry out the projects.

"Samin then sought the assistance from the Premier of Sarawak (Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg) to make representations to the federal government about expediting the move to bring in foreign workers into the state.



Dr Renco Yong

incentives for those in the SBSR sector, which the government had agreed to, he said.

"As a result of Samin's efforts, the government announced in the recent re-tableting of Budget 2023 that the bona fide tax incentives for shipyards would be extended to five years - to Dec 31, 2027. Moreover, the government also allowed the SBSR industry to continue enjoying pioneer status and the ITA (Investment Tax Allowance)."

On another matter, Yong said Samin had been very vocal about the importance of the Cabotage Policy in protecting the interests of local shipyards specifically, and the marine industries in general.

"We're also remaining steadfast in our call for the federal government to continue supporting the marine industries, especially shipyards, despite the absence of special allocation for industry players in Budget 2022. We're also at the forefront of Sarawak's maritime sector by constantly sharing our views in the local media on various issues affecting the industries; for example, providing explanation over the spike in container

## Europort 2023 seen as platform to learn about green energy technology for maritime industry

SIBU: The Sarawak Association of Marine Industries (Samin) is turning to the Netherlands to learn more about the green energy technology applied by their Dutch counterparts.

Towards this end, between 20 and 30 member companies of the association would participate in Europort 2023, to be held in Rotterdam in November.

Hailed as the premier meeting place for those involved in international maritime, the Europort has always been focusing on innovative technology and the complexities in shipbuilding.

Over the past four decades, it has grown into becoming one of the world's largest maritime business-to-business knowledge and meeting places.

According to Samin president Dr Renco Yong, the exhibition in Rotterdam - touted as the 'world's port city' - serves as a platform for the participants to learn more about incorporating the new power sources into their shipbuilding and designs in line with the target of achieving zero-emission of carbon in ports



Yong (seated, centre) in a group photo with the committee members of Samin, taken after the AGM. — Photo by Peter Boon

in Malaysia by 2030.

"Our target is to roll out battery-powered or solar-powered vessels within three to five years, which should be the first of their kind in Malaysia.

"In Germany and Netherlands, they are already using battery-powered ships. We are going to see and learn this green technology.

"Actually in the Netherlands, more than 80 per cent of the local ferries and tugboats

operating there are either powered by solar or electricity," he said during Samin's annual general meeting (AGM) here last Saturday.

Apart from Europort 2023, Yong said Samin would be taking part in two other international trade exhibitions this year.

"The first is the upcoming Malaysian International Maritime Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur.

"After that, the Europort (in

November) and in December, we will go to Shanghai in China, for the biennial maritime exhibition, which is the world's largest."

Earlier in his speech, Yong said the association had made plans for its fifth anniversary celebration, set for this October.

Moreover, he also spoke about the plan to come out with the second edition of the book on Sarawak maritime industry, of which the first edition was published in 2021.

## DBP drafting mechanism to ensure allocation of RM20 million benefits publishers

KUALA LUMPUR: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) is devising the best mechanism to ensure the allocation to be given by the government through Budget 2023 will also benefit publishers to help the country showcase

the publication of masterpieces and selected publications.

"Works of writers, which are highly impactful in the context of knowledge, philosophy and thought, will be the focus in the translation and publication of

objectives of its establishment, as stated under the DBP Act (revised 1978, amendment and extension 1995).

The objectives include printing or publishing or assisting in the printing or publication of books,

direction for publishing and translation.

"The DBP will not work in silo and will always be open to listening to the views of various parties to ensure the best mechanism is used to take advantage of the

such urgency, so as to enable our members to operate fully and take full advantage of the expected recovery in the maritime industry," said Yong during Samin's annual general meeting (AGM) here last Saturday.

Additionally, Samin had also lobbied for the extension of tax

freight rates during the Covid-19 pandemic." Yong also pointed out that despite its limited resources, Samin had been very active in promoting the marine industries in Sarawak and increase their profiles whether on public, industrial, governmental and stakeholders' platforms.

quality translated works.

DBP, in a statement yesterday, said among the issues to be focused on were the translation of original works and masterpieces in the Malay language into foreign languages and from foreign languages into the Malay language, as well as

works to develop the nation.

"The enrichment of these treasure troves of knowledge is also one of the main strategies in the effort to empower the Malay language nationally and internationally," it said.

According to the DBP, the matter is in line with the

magazines, pamphlets and other forms of literature in the national language and other languages.

To mobilise efforts as stated by the government, the DBP will hold talks with the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM) and Yayasan Karyawan soon to formulate a more focused

RM20 million allocated by the government," it added.

On Feb 24, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that the government had allocated RM20 million to DBP, ITBM and Yayasan Karyawan to encourage translation and publishing activities. — Bernama

## Abim backs emphasis on moral values during first week of school activities

**KUCHING:** The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim) supports the Ministry of Education (MoE)'s circular regarding the emphasis on moral values among students

during the first week of school activities.

Abim vice-president Zairudin Hashim regarded Circular (SPI) Number 5 of 2023 as being in line with the idea of a 'Civilised

Malaysia', in addition to the MoE's desire to raise 'karamiah insaniah' (human dignity).

"Abim insists that educational reform should start from the practice of emphasising moral

values from the first day of school, and continue until the end of the school session," he said in a statement yesterday.

Given this, Zairudin said Abim appealed to teachers and

the community to take the opportunity to shift from an examination-oriented education system to a development-oriented one.

"Abim also supports the

emphasis on values and unity, given that the community has been plagued with endless political issues and a dearth of values outside the school fence," he said.

