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Kit Siang: Be disciplined to maintain law and order

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang said today that every Malaysian must be conscious of the need for a high degree of discipline to maintain law and order "which can be quite fragile in a multi-racial society".

He said that at the same time, the Government and police must recognise the people's right to peaceful assembly to express their concerns and aspirations.

He said he agreed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Malaysia did not want mob rule and that he (Lim) had gone on record to say that Malaysians would go to the ballot box in demanding political change.

When tabling the 1999 Budget on Friday, Dr Mahathir condemned mob rule, saying that Malaysia is a democratic country, practising the rule of law.

"Malaysians do not want mob rule, but the people should be given the democratic space to exercise their fundamental right to peacefully and orderly gather to express their concerns," Lim, who the Member of Parliament for Tanjung, said as he started the debate on the Supply Bill 1999 in the Dewan Rakyat.

He also made it clear that the DAP deplores violence, obviously referring to Saturday's violent demonstration in Kampung Baru in which two policemen were injured.

Several demonstrators also threw stones, bottles and sticks at policemen and their vehicles. Some started a bonfire in Jalan Raja Abdullah.

Saying that "violence can only beget violence", Lim spoke of the need for a new spirit between the authorities and the people, and for a new political discourse in the country.

He said the political situation in the country went beyond the removal of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the allegations levelled against him.

Lim said it concerned "deep-seated hopes and aspirations of Malaysians for justice, freedom, democracy and good governance".

Lim's speech lasted one hour and 50 minutes.

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