

27/10/1998

Protesters out to create false impression of popular uprising

Hisham Abdullah

ALTHOUGH I do not deny that there are many Malaysians who truly sympathise with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in his present predicament, I do not believe that many are supportive of the illegal demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur, more so when children are used as human shields in such demonstrations.

Now that Anwar has been released from detention under the Internal Security Act and an early date has been fixed for his trial, in which he will be given every opportunity to defend himself against the charges, I do not think it is right for anyone, no matter what reservations they may have about the issue, to take to the streets and politicise the issue with so-called reformasi (reformation) slogans, which is really nothing to shout about as far as this country is concerned.

I am also inclined to believe that these demonstrations are staged more for the benefit of the foreign journalists, to create a false impression that it is a popular uprising, like what happened in Indonesia recently where President Suharto was forced to step down.

Apparently, the demonstrators are trying to do the same here, as according to a recent news report, one of the demonstrators told reporters that they wanted the King to dissolve Parliament and call for fresh elections, and also wanted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to resign and for Anwar to be reinstated to his former posts.

Maybe the demonstrators have to be reminded that theirs is not a popular uprising by any means and they are in no position to make such demands.

In any case, our Prime Minister still enjoys a lot of support and respect from a vast majority of Malaysians and the demonstrators are only wasting their time by calling for his resignation.

And as for the call that Anwar should be reinstated, I suggest that the issue be brought up again after the conclusion of his court case.