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Don't take peace in country for granted

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IT was rather distressing to read reports of material being clandestinely circulated inciting hate against leaders. It was even more disturbing to note that some even went to the alarming extent of advocating the assassination of a person no less than the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

What is this country coming to? Although one may tend to brush off such practices as the foolish and prankish work of people of questionable sanity, therein lies the possibility of some unstable person deranged enough to attempt implementing what he preaches. These matters should not be taken lightly.

This nation, amidst financial, political and social turmoil, has prided itself in maintaining a remarkable degree of stability in these trying times.

Massacres of untold horror are taking place in Indonesia, uncomfortably close to the Sarawak border. Caste-related violence in the Indian state of Bihar has taken its grisly toll.

Religious issues in Northern Ireland and communalism in Sri Lanka have resulted in thousands of casualties.

Nato initiated air attacks on Yugoslavia, a full scale civil war is imminent in Angola and, of course, in the Middle East, it goes on and on.

The peace that reigns in Malaysia should not be taken for granted. It just requires an insensitive remark and gesture, or a sporadic spot of violence to provoke something more ugly that may well expand into widespread mayhem.

Furthermore, in these times of economic distress, things are a little more on edge than before.

In this communally diverse society, and with the recent escalation of political differences, it is of paramount importance that people exercise restraint and keep their cool.

An eruption of violence will not serve any purpose but only culminate in misery, both for the victims and the perpetrators.

However, it is not presumptuous to have faith in the ever enduring resilience of Malaysians.

The state of calm that has existed all these years, even during the economic slowdown, can be attributed, with some pride, to the common sense of the people.

The diverse political groups, the various races and the different religions have existed peacefully all this while because of the inherent wisdom of Malaysians who realise the folly and danger of destroying that very delicate fabric that binds them together.

Their degree of tolerance is remarkable and admirable, and has been their saviour.

Malaysians need not be reminded of the pandemonium and frenzy that occurs in many countries during election.

Violent deaths and murders are commonplace, and reported in a matter-of-fact manner.

Misadventures of this nature are practically unheard of in Malaysia, where even a small punch-up on polling day would make headlines. Are these not blessings to be appreciated?

It is believed that messages shrouded in malice, and hints of assassination will be rejected and condemned by all peace-loving and loyal

citizens.

This is not the Malaysian way of doing things, and even if they were directed at opposition leaders, should be similarly castigated.

The authorities are urged to employ whatever means possible to identify, apprehend and charge these undesirable and irresponsible proponents of violence.

The urgency of this task cannot be over-emphasised, as the longer they are left at large, the greater will be the damage.

The Government does not pretend to be perfect. There are bound to be shortcomings and problems leading to dissatisfaction.

But there are ample avenues to address all such grievances. This is not a draconian and dictatorial administration that goes on a witch hunt to flush out genuine and well-meaning critics.

It is preposterous to think of solving predicaments by resorting to killing and hatred.

Blood begets more blood and everyone will be the loser. The good people of Malaysia are meanwhile urged not to pay heed to such trash but to continue supporting the Government's efforts to provide a serene and peaceful life for all.