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Weigh choice carefully before casting ballot

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TODAY is polling day. What is more significant about this 10th general election is that it promises a lot of excitement and anxiety in determining what kind of Government we are going to have to lead Malaysia to face the challenges of the new millennium.

Despite some heated arguments between the contending parties in the course of the election campaign, it has generally been conducted peacefully. This testifies to the maturity of the Malaysian electorate.

For one thing, we do not hear of killings or serious injuries of candidates contesting the election, as has happened in some countries during campaigning.

After 42 years of independence, we have proven that we are able to conduct our elections smoothly and orderly to fulfil the requirements of a parliamentary democracy, with candidates elected from both the ruling party and the opposition to Parliament and the State Assemblies. This is certainly to our credit irrespective of what the foreign media has to say about the elections.

Voters must take the general election seriously. They must turn out in full force to vote to help shape the future destiny of the nation.

Politics is not a spectator sport. Malaysians who turn up to vote are all active participants in the making of the nation's political future.

A stable policy is crucial for the nation's development and progress as well as economic growth. Equally important are racial harmony, religious tolerance and unity in our multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural country.

Employers who require their employees to work today must give time off for them to vote.

But before one casts his or her vote, one has to ponder very carefully about the consequences.

As a voter, if I make the wrong choice I will regret for the next five years. For example, if I vote for a candidate who is not able to deliver in terms of performance, the constituents will suffer because of his failure to perform in the constituency.

Rhetoric does not carry much weight if it is not backed by deeds. Candidates must remember that their worth will be measured by their deeds.

In this connection, voting for candidates who are truly able to perform and who can be backed by the authorities to serve the electorate will undoubtedly be a good choice.

What the electorate also needs are elected representatives who can speak up on national issues of concern to the people. It would be a better choice if we elect those whose views are likely to be heard and accepted by the authorities.

Voters must always ponder very carefully over the choice of Governments at the federal and State levels.

This election is not about Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his opponent or opponents. It is about electing a Government that can continue to lead our multi-racial and multi-religious country peacefully and progressively into the new millennium.

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