

03/08/2000

Demos not the answer

THE rule of law is sacrosanct in any society. Law and order is the bedrock of peace and stability and a breach of this can result in misery and hardship for the people. For the good of the nation, it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure there is no such violation.

Thus, it is not difficult to understand the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the police and academicians to the people not to participate in demonstrations tomorrow, when the High Court is expected to deliver judgment in the case of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is being tried on a sodomy charge.

The law should be allowed to take its course and whatever the outcome, the court's decision should be respected. The legal framework is well entrenched and transparent.

Malaysia has come a long way with its people working and living together in peace and harmony, bringing progress and prosperity. Nothing should be allowed to impede this march.

If street protests and other forms of demonstrations are not contained, they can hamper economic activities and disrupt daily lives. We must not allow the hands of the clock of development to be turned back.

Substantially and procedurally, there are proper legal channels for people to voice their dissatisfaction and grievances.

And it takes wisdom and maturity to be able to differentiate between emotion and rationality, and between provocation and perception. There are always opportunists out to create unrest and it is easy enough for them to influence the rebels in society as well as the fence-sitters.

These are people with an agenda of their own, and mature, responsible citizens should not be swayed by their views and arguments, or be used by them. The young are usually impressionable and game for most things new. And it is this group of people whom protesters will find easy enough to prey on and influence.

The education authorities have also cautioned students against taking part in any such gathering planned for tomorrow.

True, students are entitled to their views on issues but there are proper platforms to air them. The priority for students is to excel in their studies in the shortest time possible so they can contribute effectively and meaningfully to society. Should there be any disruption in their studies, it will only be their loss.

Every society has its imperfections, even in a democracy. But it is the continuous process of evolvement that improves the social fabric and contributes to development and harmony.

Democracy is not an absolute practice for it too has its limitations. It has to be adopted and adapted to suit individual needs, the basis being the maintenance of law and order along the way. If law and order does not prevail and chaos is allowed to rear its ugly head, it can only spoil the peace we have been enjoying.

We have seen and heard enough of the havoc that provocation, irrational thinking and demonstrations can do in other countries, some of which are close to us.

The public should be responsible and caring enough to be able to discern between right and wrong. Any attempt to negate peace and order is undesirable. It cannot, and should not, be accepted by right-thinking Malaysians. We should get our priorities right and carry on with our

business as usual.

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