

Perkasa: Have Your Demo Before Or After 9 July - Not On The Same Day!
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The scheduled Walk for Democracy organised by Bersih 2.0 - the election watch dog comprising 62 NGOs - on 9 July 2011 is in keeping with the democratic tradition to highlight issues of concern.

This democratic process is intended to draw the attention of the government to grievances that greatly bother the citizens of a country so that their grievances can be addressed. Their call is to conduct free and fair elections, which will legitimise election results and make them acceptable to all contestants.

Bersih had organised a similar gathering on 10 November 2007, which attracted close to 50000 participants in a peaceful attempt to demand 'free and fair' elections. One cannot help but be impressed by the disciplined and responsible conduct of the protesters then. They even cleared and cleaned the streets of all rubbish that littered the streets. They had traffic marshals to manage the crowd. They were that responsible.

Now, this proposed protest on 9 July can be expected to be orderly, disciplined and responsible. The protesters will be there representing a cause that would strengthen our democracy and make our elections meaningful. There is no reason for them to do anything stupid to jeopardise their cause by resorting to the ways of hooligans and hoodlums

They would want to convince the authorities that peaceful gatherings are possible to drive home a message in a democratic manner. They would also want to safeguard their right to similar protests in the future when necessary, by ensuring that no untoward incidents take place that would jeopardise their democratic space in the future.

Bersih 2.0 is headed by a reputable and admirable person with an impeccable character in the form of Ambiga Sreenevasan, a former president of the Malaysian Bar Council and recipient of the International Women of Courage Award.

Those associated with the Bersih 2.0 initiative are individuals of integrity who are determined to make this peaceful protest a meaningful act of democracy.

Aliran is very confident that the rally on 9 July will be a showcase of democracy that will demonstrate to the world that when gatherings such as this are organised by responsible, committed people for the good of the country, they can be peaceful, orderly and exemplary.

This is why it is difficult to understand why Perkasa is hell-bent on causing chaos and creating a ruckus by deliberately threatening to organise its counter demonstration in confrontation with Bersih 2.0 on the same day. Their intention is to wreck Bersih's peaceful gathering and to create a situation of unrest and agitation. Their declared intention threatens the peace and security of the nation

It is their political ruse to force the police to stop the Bersih 2.0 demonstration, which promises to bring in crowds never seen in the streets of Kuala Lumpur. It is their ploy not to allow this demonstration, which will show how widespread is the dissatisfaction of the people with the Election Commission, to take place.

Ibrahim Ali has declared, "If they go ahead with this demonstration, Perkasa has made a decision, and as its president, I will fight to the end. That means on that day, there will be a

confrontation.”

These are words of a trouble-maker and a rabble-rouser. He is no democrat and he has no respect for the rights of others. His mission is to stop the democratic exercise of those who believe in the rule of law. He is prepared to descend into lawlessness to create mischief and anarchy.

Aliran calls upon him to abandon his foolhardy action and behave responsibly in the interest of the nation. He should have his demonstration on a separate date if the intention is to show that he has a bigger drawing power to attract a greater crowd than what Bersih is capable of. Have your day on the street before or after the Bersih event - but not on the same day.

We would even urge the police to give Perkasa their democratic space to gather and protest.

According to the Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen: “The heart of democracy beats only with the participation of all citizens in exercising their right - first for inclusion in the political agenda issues of concern to them and second in the process.” As pointed out by him, democracy becomes dysfunctional when the rule of law is undermined.

ALIRAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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