

Rais' Unwarranted Taunting Of Bersih 3.0 Participants
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The Minister of Information, Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim's taunting of Bersih 3.0 participants at the launching of his Ministry's 1Malaysia moral guide on Thursday is most unwarranted and in very poor taste especially when Barisan Nasional Ministers and leaders are themselves most lacking in moral values.

In making derogatory references to the Bersih 3.0 participants on April 28 when launching his Ministry's book, 'Penyerlahan Amalan Nilai-Nilai Murni 1Malaysia' (Highlighting 1Malaysia's Values), Rais has greatly offended the hundreds of thousands of Malaysians, regardless of race, religion, class, region, age or gender who gathered peacefully in Kuala Lumpur on April 28 as one Malaysian people and united in one common national cause for a clean election.

Up to now, neither Rais nor any UMNO/Barisan Nasional leader including the Prime Minister has recognized or acknowledged that Bersih 3.0 was a historic and memorable national event with hundreds of thousands of Malaysians showing great patriotism and national unity, acting selflessly for the sake of the nation and future generations of Malaysians!

True, the Bersih 3.0 of April 28 was marred by incidents of violence and brutality, and all Malaysians want to know what went wrong after 3 pm that day to spoil the great unifying and peaceful carnival spirit which gave true expression to the spirit of 1Malaysia – and this is why Malaysians want a credible, independent and impartial inquiry on Bersih 3.0 like the Suhakam inquiry and not a biased and a compromised inquiry like the Hanif Omar panel.

The Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein has said that there were more than 14,000 policemen on duty on Bersih 3.0 and the Inspector-General of Police Ismail Omar had said that "Just because there are hooligans in the police force does not mean that the entire organization comprises of thugs."

I fully agree, but in the same vein, just because there were Bersih 3.0 protestors who were guilty of violence and brutality, especially under circumstances of excessive and disproportionate police violence, this does not turn the hundreds of thousands who had gathered peacefully into "rioters".

Hanif Omar said on Monday that from police briefing, a total of 140 police reports had been lodged by the public while 80 were made by the police in connection with the Bersih 3.0 rally, i.e. 140 reports against 14,000 policemen on duty that day as against 80 reports as against 200,000 protestors.

The picture is very clear – the overwhelming majority of the police personnel just like the overwhelming majority of the Bersih 3.0 had been exemplary in their conduct who should not be maligned by one brush because of the misconduct of a small number of people.

Just as credit and recognition should be given to the overwhelming majority of the police personnel on duty that day, credit and recognition must also be given to the overwhelming majority of hundreds of thousands of Malaysians who had gathered peacefully on April 28.

Are Najib, Rais and the UMNO/BN leaders prepared to publicly give this recognition?

But the other reason why Rais' taunting of Bersih 3.0 participants is most unwarranted and in very poor taste is because the Barisan Nasional Ministers and leaders are themselves most lacking in the moral values expounded in the new publication – moral values such as discipline, respect, meritocracy, integrity, humility, courtesy and loyalty.

Three instances on what happened in the past few days are sufficient to illustrate the point that BN

Ministers and leaders do not themselves set the example as "moral leaders" in the country, viz:

- The farce of the RM24,200-bid for WWW15 plate number for the Health Minister, Liow Tiong Lai, which ten days later was announced as "for free";

- Blatant abuse of power by the Minister for Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism Ismail Sabri Yaakob exempting Isa Samad from Koperasi Permodalan Felda (KPF)'s by-laws to enable him to become KPF Chairman, although Isa had been found guilty of corruption and money politics in UMNO.

- The vindictive and immoral halting of National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) loans to Universiti Selangor (Unisel) students – making the students the scapegoats of a UMNO/Barisan Nasional power tussle to recapture Selangor state government from Pakatan Rakyat.

Barisan Nasional Ministers and leaders should first practise the 1Malaysia moral values before they take to the pulpit to preach to Malaysians.

In fact, with the UMNO/BN Ministers and leaders as the worst models for the 1Malaysia policy causing the worst racial and religious polarisation during the three-year Najib premiership – what can Malaysians expect from them as exemplars of 1Malaysia moral values?

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