



PERDANA LIBRARY
PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Newspaper	The Star
Date	24/11/2011

Dr M backs Act on peaceful assembly

Bill will ensure gatherings won't turn violent, says ex-PM

JITRA: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has thrown his support behind the Peaceful Assembly Act 2011, saying it would ensure gatherings are held peacefully without any acts of violence.

He said true peaceful gatherings should not involve any acts of violence that could jeopardise the livelihood of the people.

"There is no problem if a gathering is held at a particular venue, but if the gathering goes to the street it might affect the livelihood of small traders.

"While certain people are seeking the right to hold demonstrations, the Government has a duty to protect the rights of others.

"I think the Government tabled the Bill to avoid such a crisis," he said here yesterday.

The Bill was tabled for first reading in the Dewan Rakyat on Tuesday. While allowing public assemblies without permits, it prohibits street protests.

In PUTRAJAYA, Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said street protests could damage potential foreign investors' confidence in Malaysia.

He said Malaysia was known among investors for its political stability and not for street demonstrations.

"It could be an isolated incident, but when such events get in the news, they get repeated and create a negative impression," he said here yesterday.

Bar Council constitutional law committee chairman Shahredzan Johan said the body was opposed to certain provisions in the Bill.

However, he said, the Bill did not need to be withdrawn to rectify the weaknesses.

He proposed a standing committee to be set up during the committee stage of the Bill's debate to enable Members of Parliament to study it in greater depth.

"If the Bill is passed in its current form, I would certainly object to it. But there are some good things - the fact that you no longer need a permit is good," said Shahredzan.

In KUALA LUMPUR, Pakatan Rakyat has called for the Bill to be withdrawn, labelling it repressive and undemocratic.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the Bill was more suppressive than the laws in countries like Iran and Myanmar.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang the Bill should be withdrawn to remove the undemocratic features to ensure that the new law did not end up as a more undemocratic and repressive substitute of the present law.