

'NOT TYRANNICAL

'GOVT ALLOWS PROTEST BUT IS AGAINST ANY VIOLENCE'

We have allowed matters involving race, religion to be discussed, says PM

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has dismissed allegations that his administration is tyrannical when it comes to race, religion and royalty (3Rs).

He said the government had allowed matters involving religion and race to be discussed.

"The opposition calls us cruel, and says it cannot discuss 3Rs.

This is incorrect.

"If you want to talk about Islam, or other religions, you want to talk about race, you're not satisfied, you want to protest, that's all allowed," he said at the Malaysian Human Rights Commission's (Suhakam) silver jubilee celebration yesterday.

"What is not allowed is incitement, incitement to violence or causing fights between races.

"For whatever reason, even if I am attacked by the international media, I will not tolerate it to ensure the safety of the people and the country," he said.

On another matter, Anwar said the police were open to adopting measures to prevent custodial deaths.

"We need to support all efforts to protect suspects or convicts in the lock-ups.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim mingling with attendees at the Malaysian Human Rights Commission silver jubilee celebration yesterday. PIC BY SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI

"I'm pleased to say the Home Ministry and inspector-General of Police (IGP) support the idea."

However, he said everyone should have their day in court.

He also said proper procedures were important to prevent the perception that every custodial death was due to police abuse.

"I'm speaking from experience. At that time; (I) wasn't even charged, (I) was beaten half dead.

"So, if people talk about abuse or deaths in lock-ups, there's no need to convince me.

"Because I know what we feel. Feeling helpless when attacked almost to death.

"For this reason, we need to support all efforts necessary to

protect suspects in lock-ups," he said in recalling the incident that left him with a black eye in 1998.

He urged Suhakam and the police to revisit the issue, conduct thorough studies and review procedures in handling detainees.

"Suhakam should revisit this issue, discuss it with the police and visit the lock-ups.

"I can join you because I am familiar with some of the areas," he said.

Present were Suhakam chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Hishamudin Yunus, IGP Tan Sri Razarudin Hussain and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.