

#KerajaanGagal or #RakyatGagal?

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Letter to the Editor

After the end of the long Hari Raya weekend, Malaysians who are on social media would have surely come across viral photos of snaking traffic along the highways. Among the photos that were most shared were those at the Karak Highway, Kuala Lumpur-bound from the East Coast.

Let's address the elephant in the room: The traffic jam during the Hari Raya break cannot be attributed to work alone. I'd go out on a limb and say many of those stuck in the bumper-to-bumper crawl on highways after the Hari Raya holidays were those who breached the interstate travel ban to celebrate the festival at their kampung.

Of course, some of them have valid reasons to travel, but I am sure a sizeable number of them do not. Many may claim that they had gotten approval from the international trade and industry ministry (Miti) and the police to travel for work during Hari Raya.

But let's face it: Malaysians are world-beaters when it comes to finding legal loopholes and workarounds. Under the pretext of "work", many would apply to

travel to their hometowns to be with their families. And the authorities would be hard-pressed not to approve such applications, especially if they come with official documents bearing company letterheads, which are not difficult to produce anyway.

Granted, a large chunk of the approved applications fall under the legal grey area. "Work" can be loosely defined, including those that require interstate travel. But have these travellers forgotten their moral responsibilities towards themselves and others?

Have these people forgotten that Covid-19 is not just still lingering in the community, but has unleashed a wave of assault that is frightening and deadly?

Have these people forgotten about how last year's Sabah election saw dozens die from Covid-19, not to mention the health havoc it wreaked on thousands and the knock-on socio-economic disruptions?

Late last year, a Sarawakian who flew back to her hometown in Sibul to attend her father's funeral sparked the Pasai cluster, which led to over 2,600 infections and 29 deaths. Do these people who travelled back to their hometowns want a repeat of that?

The irony is that many of these people who flout the SOPs in place during the movement control orders (MCOs) complain about the government's supposed failure to contain the spread of Covid-19.

They complain on and on about #KerajaanGagal on social media and criticise the government for having double standards when certain VIPs got a slap on the wrist for SOP violations.

Sure, the government could have addressed these issues better. But two wrongs don't make a right.

If the public does not adhere to the SOPs – not just the letter, but the spirit – then our war against Covid-19 is made that much harder by the very people who, ironically, complain that the government is not doing enough.

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