

* NAKTABAH

HARMONIOUS RELATIONS

SULTAN WANTS ACTION AGAINST EXTREMISTS

'Put a stop to views on ethnicity, religion that can incite hatred, provoke hostility'

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EXTREME views on ethnicity and religion which incite hatred and could provoke hostility among citizens must stop, the Sultan of Perak said.

Sultan Nazrin Muizzudin Shah said firm and immediate action must be taken to stop activities of any party either by speech or actions that poison the minds and rouse the people's emotions by exploiting differences in ethnicity and religion.

"This earth must not be sown with poisonous weeds that can kill the trees of unity; nor should the sky be allowed to be shrouded in acidic clouds that rain down on the earth with racist and religious-driven extremist beliefs.

"The decision of the police to take preventive measures to

maintain public order post-election was the correct course of action," he said in his opening speech at the 15th Perak State Legislative Assembly at Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan here yesterday.

Sultan Nazrin said mutual understanding and harmonious relations between ethnicities were determining factors to ensure peace and harmony for both state and country.

"Countries and states where citizens live in peace and harmony will be able to focus their attention, energy and effort to attract investors and tourists, increase economic growth and boost the development of the state, ultimately leading to prosperity for the people."

Sultan Nazrin said this country had elements that could be so easily exploited to cause anarchy.

"The harmonious inter-ethnic relations that have been established from pre-independence and maintained throughout the post-independence era should not be gambled away or jeopardised by political games that poison the minds and inflame the emotions of the people.

"Everyone thus plays a role in ensuring that harmonious inter-ethnic relations continue to be nurtured and that understanding between followers of various religions continues to be fostered.

"The people of this country, especially the younger generation, should be given guidance and education on the system of government and nationhood based on the doctrine of parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy, as well as the importance of understanding and embracing the five principles contained in the Rukun Negara as guidelines for building a united, harmonious nation in a sovereign, peaceful and prosperous independent country."

Sultan Nazrin said the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims should be tolerant, courteous and peaceful.

"Muslims have a long history of interacting with non-Muslims in various matters like commercial transactions (*ni'udamarat*), agreements and reconciliation, dating back to the time of Prophet Muhammad.

"There is nothing wrong with having good relations with non-Muslims for the sake of creating a



Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzudin Shah speaking at the 15th Perak State Legislative Assembly in Ipoh yesterday. With him is Raja Pemasuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim. **BENINAPAC**

peaceful and harmonious society," he said, adding that it was also important to strive for unity among the ummah.

As the world is predicted to face sluggish economic growth and contraction next year, Sultan Nazrin highlighted political stability as the determinant of economic recovery and development.

"With a stable political environment, the country can focus on efforts and resources on healing the economic wounds caused by the pandemic, which was exacerbated by political instability.

"The people require efficient economic governance to enable the resumption of economic activity. They desire a government that is capable and energetic in managing the country's affairs and fostering meaningful economic growth."

He said the people wanted a transparent and trustworthy government, free from corruption and breach of trust.

"It is vital for the government to

listen and understand the population's concerns, such as unemployment, high cost of living, food insecurity, environmental sustainability, education, healthcare, housing, as well as quality public relations and digital communication.

"As such, it is paramount for the state government to work with the federal government to implement strategic measures that create a favourable investment climate, increase employment opportunities, address the cost of living, ensure food security, and improve social facilities and services.

"Fulfill the people's hopes. Fulfill the people's trust."

Sultan Nazrin added that given the uncertain global economic environment and the high debt burden, state spending should be channelled to prioritised initiatives that benefit the people, and strict thrift measures to reduce wasteful expenditure should also be enforced.