Let’s base our arguments on facts, not on sentiments

OVER the last 10 days, I observed with amazement how Malaysian society thinks and more importantly, how certain local media is at fuelling sentiments, literally creating a storm of a furor in the absence of a good dose of common sense.

I am referring to Project Track 4A award last month by the Energy Commission (EC). Perhaps, at the start of this issue, the man at the helm of YTL shared his thoughts on how to move the country forward, his choice of words notwithstanding.

This touched on a sensitive issue, almost taboo, in our country for so long and sparked a mob of multitude name-calling and accusations which should not be part of our Malaysian culture.

Nevertheless, he apologised, and even that revealed an uglier spade of responses, inciting racial responses.

Joining the power tussle were numerous NGOs and unions, who played the injured party to the hill. Certain quarters played up the issue which raised Malay sentiments further fuelled by certain media in response to related comments on cronyism and affirmative action.

Forget the fact the whole incident stemmed from one man sharing his vast experiences and knowledge which took a Malaysian public listed company to the international arena, at a forum promoting transparency.

Forget this Malaysian man who would have contributed to putting the nation on the world map.

Forget the fact that our Eastern culture taught us to accept apologies and to forgive, even if we do not forget.

What is more disturbing, because of one issue, a whole entity, a business empire that provides thousands of jobs to Malaysians from all races gets attacked on a totally unrelated matter, leading to an almost free-for-all witch-hunt scenario.

This automatically drew the issue of credibility of the Energy Commission, as if the commission is so untrustworthy in making decisions. TNB’s neither here nor there stand whether to go ahead with the award raised questions of credibility of TNB. And the Sultan of Johor was questioned in public showing disrespect, foreign to our culture. This attack bordering on a vengeance mode fuels further questions and negative perception about all these parties.

I find this whole scenario rather absurd, there was simply too much sentiment-based comments. At the end of the day, this paints the picture that Malaysians are narrow minded and non-objective, over a possibly misunderstood statement of one person.

If we remove the frills of racial tension, name-calling and all other issues, we will see that any award of a project by anybody or organisation will most definitely involve considerations of cost, professionalism, effectiveness and track record.

Stop playing the racial or political cards.

In the latest development, YTL has pulled out of the Track 4A Project for whatever reasons only known to them... even then, it won’t be surprising that assumptions would be made and this whole foray would continue.

I wonder if there would ever come a time when Malaysians would truly emerge as a matured society, putting forth our arguments based on facts rather than sentiments.
The tender to build Project Track 4A was awarded by the Energy Commission. — Picture by inhabitat.com