

Anwar: Reds, Christianity threat claims a diversion
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has poured scorn on the Bersih detractors' claims that the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections are run by communists and Christians.

Calling the allegations a "diversion", the Permatang Pauh MP said that they were merely a tactic to distract the focus from the "main issue at hand" which are demands for a clean election and the freedom to assemble peacefully.

"They have labelled people as communists, and that they are waging war on the Agong. This is all just to divert attention. And now they are saying that Christians are in the mix, sponsoring the rally," Anwar (left) said.

He was speaking to reporters after an economic discussion in Klang this morning.

Thirty Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) activists were arrested on Saturday on a charge of 'waging war' against the Agong.

The police claimed that they were trying to resurrect communism after finding leaflets with names of people allegedly linked to the banned Communist Party of Malaya.

They were arrested while on board a bus at the Sungai Dua toll plaza in Penang and are currently under remand.

However, Umno-owned daily Utusan Malaysia took it a step further to say that the Bersih 2.0 movement is funded by Christians, with millions of ringgit being funnelled from some 11 foreign Christian organisations into the massive rally planned for July 9.

The daily further claimed that Bersih is being run by communists as 'evident' from the arrest of two foreigners, while alleging that communists are working hand-in-hand with an American pro-democracy NGO to 'infiltrate' Malaysia.

To all this, Anwar said the government is already frantically looking for justification to "make arrests, use the Internal Security Act and to torture people including the PSM members and (Sungai Siput MP Dr M Jeyakumar Devaraj). This is not fair," he said.

Jeyakumar was said to have been rushed to the Penang Hospital after he suffered health problems while in custody.

'Rally will go on peacefully'

Despite the police crackdown on Bersih 2.0 or any other activities potentially linked to the coalition of NGOs, Anwar said he is certain that the rally will go on peacefully.

"From the statement by (Bersih 2.0 steering committee chairperson S Ambiga) and the team, they will accept all possible rules, procedures and conditions to ensure there is a peaceful rally.

"That is the whole objective, which is to express (the demand for electoral reform) in this manner because all other avenues have failed. We have sent memos, had a series of discussions, protests, everything has been done, including submission of complaints with facts and evidence."

Giving his word that he will march alongside Bersih 2.0 on July 9 to submit a petition to Istana Negara, he said they are expected to clash with counter-rallies organised by Umno Youth and Malay rights NGO Perkasa.

Anwar last marched with Bersih at its first demonstration in November 2007 which gathered 40,000 people.

Integrity talk

At the economic discussion organised by the Klang Municipal Council, former Anti-Corruption Agency director-general Shafee Yahaya (left) gave a talk on integrity in the civil service.

He was best remembered for having been 'scolded' by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This was after he sanctioned a raid on the office of Economic Planning Unit director-general Ali Abul Hassan in 1998, and found wads of cash in a drawer.

Mahathir had called Shafee 'hostile' in his recently-released memoirs.

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