

Anwar calls on Bersih to seek royal audience
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has welcomed the Agong's call for restraint over the matter of Bersih 2.0's planned rally on Saturday, and called on the coalition to seek an audience over the issue of free and fair elections.

In a tweet this morning from London, he said he has already contacted DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang and PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang over the matter and that he receives the ruler's remarks positively.

"(I) hope Bersih will consider (seeking an) audience with Tuanku to show the flaws and fraud of the (Election Commission) EC," said Anwar (right) in his tweet.

The former deputy prime minister-turned-opposition chief made the remarks following a statement by Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin that bade all parties to stand down, after almost two weeks of heightened tensions over plans for a rally in Kuala Lumpur over the electoral system.

As many as 189 people - including four members of parliament and six state assemblypersons - have been arrested after all public displays of support for the Bersih 2.0 rally were declared illegal by the BN federal government.

Backing the government's crackdown against the coalition for free and fair elections were Umno Youth, Malay rights NGO Perkasa and a sprinkling of other groups who have openly warned of violence should the rally take place.

DAP's Lim, meanwhile, also expressed appreciation for the Agong's remarks after what he described was the "binge of madness" that had taken place over the past two weeks - which saw activists being arrested simply for wearing T-shirts indicating support of Bersih.

The call by the Agong "is most appropriate and welcome", said the Ipoh Timor parliamentarian, just as Malaysians must always conduct themselves as a "civilised society" in consultation with each other.

In line with the remarks by Tuanku Mizan, he added, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak should meet with Bersih organisers to address legitimate nationwide concerns about free and fair elections.

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein also should lift the ban on Bersih 2.0 and release all persons detained in what he said was a period of "high-handed madness" over the Bersih 2.0 rally, said Lim (left).

Among the four MPs arrested was Sungai Siput parliamentarian Dr Michael D Jeyakumar of Parti Sosialis Malaysia who - along with five fellow party activists - has been placed in detention under the Emergency Ordinance (EO) for allegedly threatening public harmony.

The EO allows for detention without trial for an initial period of 60 days, which can be extended up to two years.

Jeyakumar and 29 other people had earlier been accused under Section 122 of the Penal Code of 'waging war against the King' for allegedly spreading the communist ideology on the party's 'Udah La Tu Bersaralah' roadshow campaign that kicked off on June 24.

The accusation, later dropped, revolved around the activists' possession of banners, T-shirts and other campaign materials containing images of Che Guevara, Rashid Maidin and other symbols of revolutionary Marxism.

Two other MPs, Er Teck Hwa and S Manikavasagam of Bakri and Kapar, respectively, were arrested

yesterday also over the Bersih rally.

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