

Bersih: Najib, we demand Stadium Merdeka
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With less than 48 hours to the July 9 rally, Bersih 2.0 chairperson S Ambiga has demanded that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak honour his words and allow the coalition to use a stadium of its choice as the site of its rally.

The former bar council president (in photo, far right) also lambasted the BN-led federal government for seeking to pressure the movement calling for clean and fair elections into holding the rally in Pakatan Rakyat states rather than the stadium located in Kuala Lumpur.

"As a (member of the) rakyat, I found it horrifying that the federal government had asked us to go to Pakatan states.

"Are they saying Pakatan states better than them (BN states) for allowing a rally like this? It doesn't look good," she told reporters after meeting inspector-general of police Ismail Omar at the federal police headquarters in Bukit Aman in Kuala Lumpur.

Also at the hour-long meeting with the IGP (right) were Bersih steering committee members Wong Chin Huat and Haris Ibrahim and national laureate A Samad Said.

In a statement issued later, Bersih called upon Najib to intervene and instruct the management of Stadium Merdeka to issue a letter of approval for the usage of Stadium Merdeka for rally on Saturday.

"This will accord with the government's promise to provide us with a stadium for the rally."

The management of the stadium had yesterday said it will not allow the facility to be used for the Bersih 2.0 rally on Saturday.

Addressing this, Ambiga told reporters that the coalition will try again to book Stadium Merdeka and apply for a police permit should the stadium management approve.

This was the message conveyed to the IGP in the meeting with him this afternoon, which Ambiga said prove Bersih's willingness to work with the police to ensure the rally runs smoothly and peacefully.

"We will again apply to book Stadium Merdeka, and after that we will apply for police permit," she said, adding that the application of police permit will be made by one of the registered organisations of Bersih.

"They said Bersih is illegal... Of course, we denied it, but we will make it through one of our organisations because we also want to facilitate this rally."

Describing the applications as "administrative procedures", Ambiga reiterated that Bersih is not an illegal group but a group of registered organisations pushing for electoral reforms.

She also stressed that Bersih will not compromise on its choice of venue by picking another place for its rally.

"The police offered us to change the venue but since we have made the announcement and because of the short time, even if we change the venue, the people may still gather at this place."

In its statement on the matter, the coalition also called for the unconditional release of all those who are detained in connection with Bersih 2.0 and for the police to stop the on going harassment of its supporters.

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