

Kit to Najib: Revoke Bersih ban for 'transformation'

MalaysiaKini.com

April 25, 2012

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang will be at Dataran Merdeka on Saturday and hopes that all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion, gender or age, will join in to send a clear message that the people want clean elections for a cleaner Malaysia.

NONELim, who is DAP adviser and Ipoh Timor MP, described Saturday's sit-in as an acid test for the call for "political transformation" by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's administration and his aim to make Malaysia "the best democracy in the world"

He said Najib could do this immediately by calling for a revocation of the ban on Bersih.

"Let's start with the immediate revocation of the unjustified, unreasonable and undemocratic government ban on Bersih," Lim said.

The veteran politician added that Kuala Lumpur High Court judge Rohana Yusof has also asked Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to clarify the government's declaration of Bersih as an illegal organisation because it is a security threat, while recent developments showed that the minister's stand has changed.

NONEHe noted that in the last seven months, the Najib administration has been trying to undo the damage from the government's mishandling of last year's July 9 Bersih 2.0 rally, which saw a clampdown and unjustified arrest of six Parti Socialist Malaysia activists under the Emergency Ordinance.

"In his Malaysia day message last Sept 16, Najib promised 'political transformation' with a slew of democratic reforms and the removal of draconian laws like the Internal Security Act (ISA) and revocation of the four Emergency Proclamations.

"At that time, I asked whether the replacements and repealing of the laws and measures would result in the reincarnation of these very same draconian features in a new format," he said.

And it turned out to be true, he said, describing that new laws as "one step forward, two steps backward".

One new law is the Peaceful Assembly Act. The Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill and amendments to the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act, Printing Presses and Publications Act and the Universities and University Colleges Act were hurriedly passed by the Dewan Rakyat this month.

"This is why Pakatan Rakyat MPs could not support the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill, although we unanimously welcomed the repealing of the ISA.

"If the PM is sincere in wanting to make Malaysia the 'best democracy in the world', let him make a start by ending all government obstacles and objections to Saturday's peaceful gathering at Dataran Merdeka," Lim added.

Abim also supports Bersih

Muslim NGO Abim also expressed its support for the Bersih cause and its backing for peaceful demonstrations as a manifestation of the people's protest against weaknesses in running fair elections.

NONEAbim president Amidi Abdul Manan (left) said elections were a mechanism to manage the differences in political beliefs of a country harmoniously, if these were carried out well.

"Hence, it is vital to have various institutions, including the Election Commission, so that the people's trust can be regained. Abim urges the EC to be proactive and serious in handling all the complaints made by Bersih 3.0 and the people.

"Scrutinise the demands and complaints made, and clear the electoral roll, the management of postal voters and provide equal access to the media," Amidi said.

He warned that EC's failure to attend to the complaints of the people would create a negative perception about the commission.

Looking at the current political scenario, it would be vital to improve the electoral roll as failure to do so would create a murky political situation that would prevent the smooth running of the 13th general election.

"I also call on all Malaysians to come down to join the protest," Amidi added.

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