

DBKL moves in to enforce Dataran lockdown

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By Nigel Aw

The Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) moved in early this morning - the eve of the Bersih 3.0 rally - to enforce a lockdown of Dataran Merdeka where the sit-in protest is to take place.

NONEArriving with several lorry loads of metal and plastic barricades, scores of DBKL men began erecting them to cordon off the entire field as early as 2.30am.

According to Gerakan Mahasiswa Pantai Timur's Syahmi Hazim Mohd Ithnin, activists camping along the walkway by the field for the 14th day today in anticipation of the Bersih 3.0 protest were ordered to leave the area at 4am.

The 30 or so activists abided by the order and have since relocated across the road, by the iconic Sultan Abdul Samad building.

Hours before, at midnight, some 100 activists and supporters had gathered at Dataran Merdeka for their nightly public lecture while others took the opportunity to sell Bersih T-shirts.

NONEAt 2.30am, DBKL officers began setting up steel barricades along the field facing Jalan Raja and reinforced them with a layer of plastic barricades.

However, at press time, the field was only sealed off with a single layer of plastic barricades on the side facing the Kuala Lumpur Library and Warisan Restaurant.

Jalan Raja, the main road that runs along the public square, remained open to traffic.

According to Kuala Lumpur mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail, the square will be closed from 6am today until 6am on Sunday.

Call for Bersih camp-in at Dataran

Meanwhile at a press conference, Occupy Dataran activist Fahmi Reza called on protesters who will be participating in Bersih 3.0 tomorrow to camp at Dataran Merdeka tonight.

"We are issuing a call for action to reoccupy Dataran Merdeka.

"People who will be participating in Bersih 3.0 should come down with their tents at 8.30 tonight, together with Occupy Dataran to reclaim our public space.

"Tonight's occupation will be an act of protest against the mayor and DBKL for taking away our public space," he said.

NONEFahmi also criticised DBKL for its plan to prosecute him, claiming that DBKL had betrayed his trust.

The mayor had said that Fahmi who had signed an offence notice when retrieving the group's items which were confiscated last Saturday meant that he was aware of his own offence but had continued to violate the law.

"When I received the offence notice, I asked them (DBKL) to explain what it was but they said it was only a procedure and that I don't have to worry about signing the form.

"I trusted the officers because in previous negotiations they have appeared trustworthy but he did not disclose the repercussions after I signed the documents," he said.

Occupy Dataran, along with another group of student activists have faced several raids by DBKL officers since camping out at Dataran Merdeka in anticipation of the Bersih 3.0 tomorrow.

DBKL later officially sealed Jalan Raja at 1pm and many police personnel showed up at Dataran Merdeka. Around 100 uniformed police personnel were seen, along with tens of DBKL enforcement officers.

However, no actions were taken, neither from the DBKL enforcement team nor the police against the activists and students, who are now resting at the Sultan Abdul Samad building.

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