

Mayor denies DBKL is gov't's Bersih scapegoat

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By Nigel Aw

Kuala Lumpur mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail has denied that the KL City Hall (DBKL) has been made the scapegoat to handle the electoral reform protest by Bersih 3.0 tomorrow.

Such a notion was merely made in analyses by the media, Ahmad Fuad told a press conference at the DBKL headquarters this morning.

"What goat? Has a goat escaped? I don't feel that (we are being made a scapegoat)," he quipped.

ahmad fuad ismail dbklAhmad Fuad (right in photo) was responding to a question on DBKL's prominent role in handling the protest in contrast to previous Bersih rallies that were largely handled by the government and police.

"We are busy (handling Bersih) because they want to use our area. If they want to march at KLCC, we aren't bothered, but Dataran Merdeka is under our jurisdiction," he said.

Echoing Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, Ahmad Fuad said DBKL would be perceived as weak if it did not act against Bersih.

"If Dataran Merdeka has been rejected, then the rally there is illegal... if we do not enforce the law, then outsiders will see DBKL as weak," he said.

He added that he is not opposed to peaceful assemblies but his main focus was that the iconic square is off-limits for protests.

'Stadium Merdeka also historical'

He also slammed Bersih's insistence to use Dataran Merdeka for its protest venue for its "historical value" instead of the alternative Stadium Merdeka which has been offered to them.

"They should look at their historical facts, Stadium Merdeka was where the British Union Jack was lowered, it is where the independence declaration was made," he said.

Asked why was DBKL offering Dataran Merdeka this time but had refused to allow the venue during Bersih's last rally, Ahmad Fuad said the stadium was undergoing renovations then.

In the last two weeks, students and social activists have been camped at Dataran Merdeka in anticipation of the Bersih 3.0 rally.

Throughout the occupation, police had refused to intervene, forcing DBKL officers to bundle protesters into vans and transport them to Dang Wangi district police headquarters, where they then lodged a police report against the protesters.

