

KL police: Bersih 3.0 can gather but not march
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Supporters of Bersih 3.0 are permitted to gather at the meeting points but are prohibited from marching to Dataran Merdeka as provided for by the recently enforced Peaceful Assembly Act (PAA), said Kuala Lumpur police chief Mohmad Salleh.

He said any group moving to Dataran Merdeka to join the banned sit-in tomorrow will face police action, and possible arrest.

The police obtained a court order last night barring the coalition for clean and fair elections from sitting-in at Dataran Merdeka tomorrow.

Mohmad said supporters and organisers are prohibited from marching from the meeting points to anywhere too close to streets bordering the venue.

"Seeing that the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) rejected Bersih's application and the police received intelligence and information that the organisers are adamant on going ahead, considering issues of safety and peace we had applied for a court order under Section 98 of the Criminal Procedure Code," said Mohmad at the police contingent headquarters.

The order bars all activities at Dataran Merdeka from tomorrow till May 1, he said, adding that any violation of the order carries a maximum jail term of six month or RM2,000 fine or both under Section 188 of the Penal Code.

The organisers had identified six gathering locations - Masjid Negara, Jalan Sultan, Jalan Masjid India, Central Market, Brickfields fountain, Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC).

Participants of environmental coalition, Himpunan Hijau, plan to make their way from KLCC to Dataran Merdeka to join forces with Bersih.

Asked if there will be road closure or road blocks leading to the gathering points, that, Mohmad told reporters, would depend on tomorrow's situation.

No restrictions have been place on t-shirts and other paraphernalia related to Bersih or Himpunan Hijau, he said, unlike the July 9 rally last year when yellow coloured Bersih related materials were outlawed.

At a simultaneous press conference at another location, Bersih chief Ambiga Sreenevasan said that they will adhere to the court order but will try to get as close as possible to the iconic field.

The security move against the coalition, however, contradicts Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's assurance that the rally is not a security threat.

DBKL, under orders from Mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail, said in a statement that the restriction will be enforced according to the Local Government (Dataran Merdeka) (Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur) By-Laws 1992 and section 65 of the Local Government Act 1976 until Sunday 6am.

City hall has since barricaded the historic square and both DBKL and the government have repeatedly urged Bersih to change the venue of the sit-in to other venues including Stadium Merdeka which was ironically off limits to the tens of thousands during last year's July 9 rally.

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