

300,000 at Bersih 3.0, Ambiga claims success

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Electoral reforms pressure group Bersih 2.0 says its rally today was a great success, claiming that 300,000 Malaysians had joined the Bersih 3.0 rally to call for an overhaul to the electoral system.

"In that sense it was a success," said the coalition for clean and fair elections co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan at a press conference at the KL Sentral after the rally.

NONE "The atmosphere was wonderful and the numbers that were there - it was tremendous."

"We feel that it was a success because there was so much support for the cause and everything was fine (so much so) that we gave the order to disperse very quickly, by 2.30pm, because as we got to Dataran (Merdeka) it was very difficult for the people to sit down," Ambiga said.

"Now, as far as the crowd is concerned, they were so well behaved for such a large number.

"Apart from the one incident that seem to set out things that had happened - of which I've just got news - and that's why I feel very bad and sad," said Ambiga, referring to incident at Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman where a police vehicle was overturned.

NONE She also expressed regret over the chaos that took place after part of the barriers cordoning Dataran Merdeka from trespass were brought down, saying that it was "very sad".

She was particularly concerned over the news that supporters and police personnel on duty were injured in the melee, and stressed that the steering committee would fully cooperate with police in their investigation.

However, as there were no accurate facts at hand, Ambiga said, Bersih would call a press conference next week on the details.

"But the crowd that we saw before us, that we led, are not the kind of crowd that commits acts of violence like this. Having said that, whoever perpetrated this act will have to face the law. We will never support acts of violence, must be investigated," she stressed.

NONE Asked if there had been politically-minted speeches by politicians at the meeting points for the march, Ambiga said: "We specifically said that no anti-party or pro-party slogans are allowed, we issued guidelines that no one can promote party politics.

"But when people do that, there isn't much that we can do. I can tell you that if I had heard it I would have put a stop to it."

Ambiga added that it was undeniable that the police were "Not very restrained", since there had been "excessive use of tear gas".

