

Media bias on Bersih 3.0 stuns Aussie senator
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By Leven Woon

An Australian senator monitoring the Bersih 3.0 rally yesterday was stunned when he tuned in to television reports at night to find that news coverage of the event was grossly distorted.

"I watch television news and only saw 30 seconds of the coverage to the demonstration, with no word about it being one of the largest demonstrations in Malaysian's history.

nick xenophon 290412"Instead they spend more time saying (premier) Najib Abdul Razak having a tea and eating banana fritters in Sabah," Nicholas Xenophon told a press conference today.

Xenophon is part of a seven-member international team on an fact-finding mission on Malaysia's electoral system.

They were invited by PKR de facto Anwar Ibrahim, in his capacity as Parliamentary opposition leader.

The press conference was called today because the group was releasing its interim report of their study.

The group had also observed the rally yesterday, which was largely peaceful until the Dataran Merdeka cordon was breached, sparking widespread arrest, use of heavy-handed tactics, tear gas and water cannon rounds.

Protestors could have been provoked

Prominent Indian journalist Mobashar Jawad Akhbar, who is the member of the group, opined that the police might have provoked the protestors, with the intention of turning things violent.

"The crowd has been building overnight, they have ample time to be violent if they wanted to. It was very peaceful until the very end.

"I do believe that the provocation was perhaps done in order to create images that will play well in the official media," said Mobashar, who observed the rally for five hours.

He said that this provoking the victims in order to blame them later, was "one of the oldest tricks" employed by various authorities.

Mobashar, the editorial director of India Today, noted that the crucial essence of democracy is the freedom from fear, which he said is "non-negotiable".

"Democracy does not function when ppl do not have right to assembly," he said, praising the protestors for rising above fear.

Xenophon said that their observation of how the media reported the rally would be included in the team's full report, which is scheduled for release in three weeks.

