

**Amidst the grim spectacle, cheers and kinship**  
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**By Nicholas Wong**

Amid numerous reports of police brutality, protester violence and accusations across both sides of the political divide, one could be forgiven for thinking that the Bersih 3.0 last Saturday was nothing but a grim spectacle.

But among the many sobering and negative stories, there are a few bright gems with cheerful elements of humanity, random kindness, the power of technology and networks, and the Malaysian spirit of kinship.

Bersih 3.0 participant Chen Soon Kheng's own story has all these elements, and more.

During the rally, Chen lost his bag in the chaos following the firing of tear gas and water cannons near Dataran Merdeka.

In the bag were all his valuables: mobile phone, some cash, house keys, car keys and his identity card among other things.

Worried sick, Chen attempted to locate his bag but to no avail.

He even tried calling his mobile phone in the hope of locating anyone who may have stumbled across his bag but failed, as mobile signals were congested due to the bustle of the day.

He also crawled around with his leg bleeding, as protesters around him jostled for an open space away from the tear gas.

Later he roped in his friends to help in the search, and despite labelling it suicidal to brave approaching Dataran Merdeka again, they followed him as he dodged more tear gas, red menacing FRU trucks and more policemen.

Unluckily, Chen's search ended in vain. Undeterred, he returned at 11.30 the same night to try his luck, walking all the way to Masjid Jamek.

Near Dataran Merdeka, he found an odd collection of lost shoes, anonymously arranged neatly in a group, but no bags. Other than the shoes, he recounted: "I only found some rubbish on the ground."

However, a miracle came his way close to midnight when a friend alerted him of a Facebook post looking for the owner of a bag with Chen's lost items.

Family outing at Bersih rally

Within five minutes, Chen was in contact with the person who had found his belongings. And by about 3am on April 29, barely 12 hours after he had lost his bag, he recovered his lost belongings entirely intact.

Chen's lost bag was found by Deric Lee, who was with his wife, their siblings and a friend on a "family outing" at the Bersih rally.

After the police crackdown began, Lee found the bag on the ground and took it with him before regrouping with his family.

Malaysiakini contacted Lee's wife, Erine who detailed how they waited for several hours for Chen to phone and locate them.

She said they understood the anxiety of losing one's valuables, having lost their identity cards before. They were therefore particularly sympathetic with Chen because his bag contained so many of his valuables.

"His car keys were also there...we were so worried, thinking that his car was stuck somewhere in Kuala Lumpur with him being unable to go home," she said.

Eventually, Erine's sister-in-law created the Facebook post that ultimately led to Chen recovering his lost bag. She spoke to Chen and worked out a meeting.

"We had gone for a midnight show (at the cinema) so we met Soon Kheng very late, at almost 3am. But we were still very energetic that day.

"He was so happy to get his bag back," she said, describing the priceless look on Chen's face and their own satisfaction in doing a good deed for another.

"If only everyone could do the same, the world would be a better place."

But for Erine, the story was also about meeting a fellow Malaysian. "Because of all this, we got to make another friend," she added cheerfully.

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