

Chegubard denies orders given to breach barrier

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By Aidila Razak

Badrul Hisham Shaharin, who was conducting crowd control during Bersih 3.0, said participants were instructed to disperse moments before the barrier was breached at Dataran Merdeka.

NONEBadrul (left), who is more popularly known as Chegubard, told Malaysiakini that instructions given to him by PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim were to direct the crowd towards Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman to disperse.

"I was at the head of the pick-up truck (carrying Bersih leaders and Anwar)... a decision was needed to be made on whether to turn to the Masjid Negara roundabout or to Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

"The command to SAMM was to turn into Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman slowly so that the crowd will follow and disperse slowly," he said, referring to his NGO, Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia (SAMM).

An eyewitness video shows that Anwar, who was on the SAMM pick-up truck at the corner of Jalan Tun Perak and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, gesturing to turn right.

"We want to turn to the right so we will not be in front of the police," Chegubard, who is also a Negri Sembilan PKR leader, is recorded as saying in the video.

Confusion over hand signals

However, the crowd started chanting "buka, buka" (open the barrier) and within seconds, the barrier was breached and white smoke was seen travelling fast into the crowd.

The Dataran breach was used by authorities to justify the crackdown on the protesters, who had since 9am on Saturday gathered peacefully.

This resulted in more than 500 arrests and bloody scuffles between police and protesters.

NONEStill under the spotlight for the Dataran breach are Anwar and PKR deputy president Azmin Ali, who were caught in another eyewitness video signalling to each other.

Azmin is seen saying something to another PKR leader R Thangam, who is seen moving the metal gate part of the barricade.

Thangam, who is currently under remand for his involvement in the incident, however told Malaysiakini on Monday night that there were no instructions to breach the barrier.

"I moved the metal gates because they fell on my leg," he said, several hours before his midnight arrest.

Chegubard, who was standing behind Anwar when the hand gestures occurred, claimed Azmin was signaling that he was going in to speak to the police commander and negotiate for safe passage out of the area.

"The water cannon engines were already started. Azmin was to go in to speak to the security personnel to negotiate for time to disperse but everything just happened so fast," he said.

'It is time to go home'

At a press conference on April 30, Azmin said he was signaling to tell Anwar that negotiations with police were done.

dataran breach barricade cordon 290412The hand gestures were seen by many as indication to enter Dataran Merdeka, and go against the pledge made by Bersih 3.0 organisers.

It has also led to accusations of political hijacking of the NGO coalition for clean and fair elections by the opposition Pakatan Rakyat leaders.

But Chegubard said he had personally invited political leaders onto the SAMM pick-up truck to speak in order to calm the crowd.

Indeed in one of the eyewitness videos, he promises the crowd that the politicians will speak again if they moved away from Dataran Merdeka.

Chegubard said many youths were not happy when told to disperse by Bersih co-coordinator S Ambiga and were even prepared to camp out in the heart of Kuala Lumpur.

"I asked Lim Kit Siang to come up to speak so that his followers would listen to him. He told the crowd, 'Our message has been sent and it is time to go home'.

"We needed the politicians to convince the demonstrators that the (Bersih) message has been sent," he stressed.