

Mukhriz's anti-rally stance 'undemocratic'

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Newly-minted Kedah Menteri Besar Mukhriz Mahathir has been urged to respect the rights of the people in the state to freedom of speech and assembly.

NONEPKR's Alor Setar MP Gooi Hsiao Leung (left) said his refusal to allow Pakatan Rakyat to hold the 'Black 505' assembly at the Suka Menanti Stadium tomorrow marks "the first black day of the decline of democratic freedoms in Kedah for the next five years".

"During Pakatan's rule in Kedah over the past five years, public places such as the Suka Menanti Stadium were open to all political parties to use freely without any discrimination," Gooi said in a statement.

"It is regrettable that Mukhriz has chosen to act in such a discriminatory manner, curtailing the rights of Kedahans to hold peaceful assemblies to express themselves, as guaranteed by the federal constitution."

Mukhriz had said he would not allow the rally at the Sultan Abdul Halim Stadium in Suka Menanti, and that the purpose of any such event should be scrutinised before approval is granted.

He had issued the statement in his capacity as Kedah Stadium Corporation chairperson.

Gooi said the reason cited by Mukhriz - that there would be 'hate speech' against the BN during the rally - is unacceptable to Kedahans who are "mature enough to distinguish between truth and falsehood".

penang save democracy rally 180513 02He also said the decision goes against the will of hundreds of thousands of Malaysians who have participated in similar assemblies across the country to demand accountability for alleged fraud in the 13th general election concluded on May 5.

"Regretfully, the new MB's action will mark the beginning of a reign of suppression and dismantling of democratic rights and practices enjoyed by Kedahans over the past five years," said Gooi.

"The rejection of the rally signals the rise of a mini-Mahathirfiraun..."

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