

Police will facilitate Black 505, claims PKR

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By Koh Jun Lin

The key organiser of tomorrow's 'Black 505' rally, PKR, said today it received unofficial notification from the Dang Wangi police district headquarters that police will facilitate the rally.

This is on condition that the rally participants do not damage public property, party strategy director Rafizi Ramli said in a statement this evening.

"I wish to thank Dang Wangi police chief Zainuddin Ahmad for his assistance, including his willingness to sit down and discuss with me and my Pakatan Rakyat colleagues (even though the meeting was called off)," he said.

However, when asked to confirm a news report on the same matter earlier today, Zainuddin told Malaysiakini via SMS, "Police will take action against those who do not obey the Peaceful Assembly Act. Anything else, no comment. Thank you."

Earlier today, before receiving the purported unofficial notification from the police, Rafizi told Malaysiakini that leaders of tomorrow's rally have been told to "play by ear" during the event because the organisers have yet to receive any official indication on how the police would react to it.

Rafizi said the Pakatan and NGO leaders involved in the rally had been asked to attend a meeting with the Dang Wangi police district chief Zainuddin Ahmad yesterday.

However, the meeting was called off at the last minute because Zainuddin was summoned to a meeting at the Bukit Aman police headquarters, and rally organisers have not heard from the police since then.

NONE "If we are allowed to proceed peacefully to Padang Merbok, I think we would know by noon tomorrow, and within two hours we should be able to set up the whole sound system (at Padang Merbok).

"Otherwise, I think the gathering will probably take place over the whole area (just outside the police cordon) and there will be a few points where speeches will be made. A mobile loudspeaker system will be available," Rafizi said when contacted today.

Asked what would happen if the police ordered the crowd to disperse, Rafizi said a decision would be made by the rally leaders, including PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu and Sungai Petani MP Johari Abdul, on the spot.

The rally tomorrow, to protest against alleged electoral fraud and misconduct in the 13th general election that was held on May 5, is scheduled to begin at seven gathering points around Kuala Lumpur.

These are Pekeliling, PAS' headquarters at Jalan Raja Laut, Sogo Shopping Centre, Hotel Lok Ann on Jalan Sultan, the National Mosque, Brickfields and Universiti Malaya.

300,000 people expected to take part

Protesters will start gathering at noon, then leave their gathering points from 2pm and are expected to arrive at Padang Merbok at 3pm. The rally is expected to conclude in time for Maghrib prayers at 7pm.

Rafizi said some 300,000 people are expected to take part, with some 2,000 rally marshals and a medical team of about 55 persons mobilised to facilitate it.

Half of the rally marshals would come from PAS's Unit Amal (Welfare Unit), while PKR's Youth Wing and NGO volunteers would add 500 each to the number.

In a separate statement later, he said medical camps would be set up at Padang Merbok, Dataran Merdeka, the National Mosque, Sogo, and Dataran Maybank.

They will be backed by four ambulances and five motorcycles, as well as life support equipment such as automated external defibrillators and intravenous drips.

He urged members of the public to SMS information regarding medical emergencies to 010-277 2072 with the following information:

Nature of the emergency and the number of the persons affected.

Exact location of the emergency.

Phone number of a contact person at the site of the emergency.

The Pandan MP also advised participants to bring bottles of water and handkerchiefs, in case the haze in Kuala Lumpur worsens.

The Air Pollutant Index (API) in Kuala Lumpur has stayed at a 'moderate' level through much of this week, according to the Department of Environment's website.

In addition, Rafizi said, members of the public should head for the toilets whenever possible as it is not certain whether there will be enough toilets available at the venue.

NONERafizi said the people could also expect at least 20 'usual suspects' to speak at the rally, including Anwar, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, Bersih co-chairperson A Samad Said (left), Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia (SAMM) leader Badrul Hisham Shaharin and representatives from Anti-Lynas and pro-oil royalty groups.

However, he said, the exact number of speakers would be difficult to determine at this time.

"The way we have done it so far is that at any time and every time, we would just grab anyone and they would just speak. In our past experience, in the ('Black 505') rally we had in Kelana Jaya, 31 speakers were featured," he said.

Asked about the plan of a group of NGOs to camp at Padang Merbok until the new Parliament convenes on Monday, Rafizi said he could not comment on the issue because Pakatan Rakyat had never discussed it.

SAMM, which leads the group, plans to hold a protest outside Parliament House, which is close to Padang Merbok, on that day.

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