

Gov't and Bersih negotiating settlement of civil suit

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By Hafiz Yatim

The government and Bersih 2.0 are looking into the possibility of settling the civil suit filed on May 15 last year against members of the coalition for clean and fair elections.

NONE Bersih 2.0 co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan said the trial dates, fixed for four days from today, have been vacated until Jan 6 to 10 next year.

"(The) parties have discussed and looked into the possibility of a settlement. If we do not manage to settle by the January date, we will go for trial," she said.

The trial was to have begun today at the Kuala Lumpur High Court before Justice John Louis O'Hara.

The government had filed the civil suit against Ambiga and nine other steering committee members, seeking reparation of damages allegedly caused during the Bersih 3.0 protest on April 28 last year.

Initially, following the April 28 rally last year, the government named Ambiga and nine members of the Bersih steering committee members as the defendants.

However, since then the court has allowed to include the six other steering committee members that include national laureate A Samad Said and former Bar Council president Yeo Yang Poh, among others.

The court had also agreed to remove lawyer Haris Ibrahim from being one of the defendants.

Claiming special compensation of RM122,000

The government is claiming special compensation amounting to RM122,000 as the costs for repairing damaged police vehicles, other costs, interests and other relief deemed fit by the court.

It is also seeking a declaration that the defendants, as the organisers of the Bersih 3.0 rally, had violated Section 6 (2)(g) of the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012, as they had the responsibility, among others, of ensuring that the gathering would not cause damage to public property.

In the statement of claim, the government also stated that the gathering around Dataran Merdeka turned unruly when the participants broke through the police barricades.

Besides the suit filed by the government, several of the Bersih leaders had also filed a counter-claim against the government.

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