

No 'room' for MPs to discuss WSJ in Parliament

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Police have stepped up security at Parliament ahead of a scheduled bipartisan meeting of lawmakers on the 1MDB controversy.

According to Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli, as a result police have denied the lawmakers a room for the meeting.

"We should be at least entitled to use a hall," he said when contacted.

However, the hall requested by the MPs had been booked by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Thus, the MPs decided to hold the meeting at a shaded area outside the building at Parliament Square instead.

The meeting was organised by opposition leader Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Approximate 100 MPs and representatives from NGOs attended the meeting, with the theme "Quo Vadis Malaysia with a Prime Minister accused of embezzlement".

It was understood that some 20 NGOs were invited to attend the meeting but only 25 activists and leaders were allowed to enter the Parliament compound.

Attempt to strike fear in MPs

Rafizi criticised the Senate House president Abu Zahar Nika Ujang for denying them the facilities and for thinking that they would just go home instead.

In a Tweet, Gelang Patah MP Lim Kit Siang described the security overkill as an attempt to strike fear in MPs.

"Big security crisis in Parliament! Why? Because MPs want to have meeting on WSJ (The Wall Street Journal) allegation against Najib with NGO reps," wrote Lim.

It is unsure why the police presence is even heavier now than when the Dewan Rakyat was in session.

However, there have been news reports that several NGOs in Penang had lodged police reports aimed at preventing former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad from showing up at Parliament today.

But according to Mahathir's aide, he was never scheduled to attend any function at the Parliament today.

Briefing rooms not occupied

The meeting which commenced at 12.15pm and went on until 1.30pm saw approximately 10 MPs and leaders delivering their speeches.

Among the attendees are DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, PKR deputy president Azmin Ali and PAS secretary-general Takiyuddin Hassan. PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang was absent.

The representatives of NGOs included Negaraku patron S. Ambiga, Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah, Centre to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) founding director Cynthia Gabriel, activist Hishamuddin Rais, student activist Fahmi Zainol and Gerakan Harapan Baru secretary Zulkefly Ahmad.

Meanwhile, PKR whip Johari Abdul revealed that the briefing rooms were in fact not occupied.

"This proves that the government controls the Parliament. The august House is no more independant, the government should restore the separation of powers as enshrined in the Federal Constitution," he said.

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