

Malay participation in Bersih 4 on the rise
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The second day of Bersih 4 today saw a noticeable increase in Malay participation compared to yesterday, although the Chinese still makes up the majority of participants.

As of 6pm, ground reports revealed that for many Malay participants, the peaceful nature of the protest played a part in their decision.

Participant Anissa Aznan (photo) from Putrajaya said she was initially concerned of a police crackdown.

"Initially, I was afraid of tear gas. But after browsing through Twitter, Bersih is peaceful. Hence, I'm here," said Anissa, who lamented that she couldn't get hold of a Bersih T-shirt in time.

Restaurant operator Firdaus Misnan from Klang told Malaysiakini that he too could only show up today and that it was important for him to do so.

Some participants said that they were unable to join the rally yesterday because of work commitments.

Nurul Fateen Farhana Mohd Saadon, 21, who described herself as a former BN supporter, said she decided to participate in Bersih 4 because she was frustrated with the ruling party.

"The (big) Chinese crowd here doesn't concern me. We are (all) brave," said Nurul Fateen Farhana, who donned a pink tudung to the rally.

"It's the wrong colour, but I'm not with Puteri Umno," she quipped.

Similarly, Syafiq Ahmad, 19, said she too was caught up with work yesterday.

"The crowd here are showing fighting spirit. I'm proud," said Syafiq, when met at Jalan Tun Perak.

He said his food business is severely affected by the implementation of GST, hence he attended Bersih 4 to state his protest by holding up a placard which read: "Najib! Donate RM20k. I need to get married".

'More will come'

The placard was quite a hit with the crowd, who passed it around for photographs.

"I want to tease Najib... I am single and I want to get married but I can't afford the cost," said the 29-year-old.

On the ethnic composition of the rally, Firdaus said that he was optimistic more would show up today.

"Like me, I could only come today. More will come," he said, adding that 12 of his friends were joining him today.

The racial composition of Bersih 4 had resulted in heated discussions on the impact of the rally and whether Bersih's demands did not resonate with the Malay community.

Bersih 4 was aimed at calling for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's resignation over his receipt of RM2.6 billion in "donation" and also his handling of the 1MDB controversy.

The rally was also to demand for institutional reforms, such as clean elections and respect for dissent.

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