

Bersih Rally Organisers Told To Consider Effects On Country, People
Malaysianmirror.com
June 16, 2011

KUALA LUMPUR -- Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin wants the organisers and individuals intending to participate in the rally of the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih), to think carefully on its effects to the government, country and people.

He said the people were worried that the rally could cause public disorder because opponents of the gathering were also planning to hold their own rally.

"The police have received many complaints and this may spark unrest in the country and as the police will not be issuing a permit, it is therefore an illegal gathering and in violation of the law.

"The rally is certainly not receiving support from all people but just groups or parties with vested interests," he said when asked to elaborate on Bersih's plan to hold the gathering, which will be its second, on July 9.

Speaking to reporters after opening the 2011 ASEAN Dengue Day and the re-launching of the COMBI programme here yesterday, Muhyiddin said the rally organisers had not considered the question of peace the country had achieved so far but were only concerned with their political interests and those of their groups.

"Various sensitive allegations and issues have been raised but the country needs to maintain peace for the economy to expand, but they are oblivious of this," he said.

The second rally has been planned for July 9 here and in Sabah and Sarawak to demand for fair and just general elections, including voter lists clean-up, reformation of postal voting, usage of indelible ink and access to free and fair media.

In 2007, Bersih organised an illegal rally to present a memorandum to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong at Istana Negara, Jalan Tuanku Syed Putra.

The gathering started from Dataran Merdeka but failed to garner 100,000 participants as targeted when only a few thousands took part.

The street demonstration however threatened public order and caused major traffic congestions at several leading locations in the capital.

When asked to comment on the action of fishermen and boat operators going on strike to protest the hike in diesel price this month, Muhyiddin said they should not act in haste.

"This is because their action could affect the supply of fish in the country and the long term effects would not be good and what we can help we will do so," he said.

Muhyiddin said the Minister of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Noh Omar had already evaluated the matter which would be brought to the Cabinet for deliberation.

In SANDAKAN, Umno vice-president Mohd Shafie Apdal, who is also Rural and Regional Development Minister, said the Bersih rally was being organised because the opposition was afraid to face the coming general election.

"The action can cause damage to businesses, inconvenient taxi users and also those going out to earn a living," he told reporters after opening the Kinabatangan Umno divisional delegates meeting here.

(Bernama)

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