

Govt Prepared To Meet Rally Organiser
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PUTRAJAYA -- The government is prepared to meet with the rally organiser on July 9 on conditions that the non-governmental organisation abide by the stipulated conditions.

Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak said he was told that the group wanted to meet the government to consider the possibility of holding the gathering in a stadium.

"We are prepared to meet them so that the gathering would be held in a stadium, on the condition that they will go to the gathering in peace and they will return home in peace," he said.

He said this to reporters after chairing the first meeting of the Malaysia Innovation Agency's governance council at his office here yesterday.

The organisers of the July 9 rally had changed their plan and now want to hold their gathering in a stadium after its chairman, Ambiga Sreenevasan had an audience with the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin at Istana Negara on Tuesday.

Ambiga said the plan to hold the road demonstration this Saturday was cancelled, and that they had agreed with the suggestion of the government to hold it in a stadium.

Najib said if the gathering was held in a stadium and something untoward took place, the organiser of the gathering would be held responsible.

"(They will be held responsible for) all that can happen and will happen which can cause chaos or damage to properties or causing hurt to any individual or even worse than that.

"We hope they will keep their promise that all will progress well, peacefully and there is no case of any unwanted incident taking place," he said.

When asked if it would be an offence for any individual to wear a yellow shirt of the organiser, Najib said it was up to the police to decide.

"We consider them (the organiser of the gathering and the gathering itself) illegal...(but) they don't consider themselves illegal; what is important is to protect the interest of the public. I want to protect the Malaysian public from anything untoward happening to them.

"...and that is why I am very concerned. I do not want street demonstration to take place because it is going to be very very injurious to the interest of the public," he added.

When asked if the organiser of the gathering had submitted an application to the government, the prime minister said to date the authorities had not received any.

"We have made the offer. Let's see. But the offer is subject to certain conditions. The main point is that everything must be done peacefully," he said.

Asked if Umno would also hold a gathering this Saturday, Najib said the party would not do so.

"If Umno wants to respond, we can have a much bigger gathering...a much bigger

demonstration. I can assure you that the crowd will be very big," he said.

(Bernama)

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