

Govt Fears Salt And Water Bottles
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By Lim Kit Siang

Question No. 4 during Question Time in Parliament today was the star attraction of the day as I had asked the Prime Minister to substantiate his allegation more than a month ago that Bersih 3.0 rally was a coup attempt by the Opposition to overthrow the government.

MPs from both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat were expecting some "shocking" revelations to substantiate the very serious allegation by the Prime Minister, Najib Razak in Gua Musang on 4th May and which had the immediate support of three former Inspectors-General of Police, Hanif Omar, Rahim Noor and Musa Hassan that the Bersih 3.0 rally was a coup d'état attempt by Pakatan Rakyat to overthrow the Najib government on April 28 itself!

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Nazri Aziz, who replied on behalf of Najib, was however a total disappointment as he could not give even an iota of evidence to substantiate Najib's allegation and went completely off tangent into a tirade against Bersih 3.0 and Pakatan Rakyat.

Nazri is entitled to his jaundiced views about Bersih 3.0 and Pakatan Rakyat but they do not constitute evidence that the Bersih 3.0 rally on April 28 was a coup attempt by Pakatan Rakyat to topple the Barisan Nasional government by force on April 28.

As I countered Nazri during my supplementary question, is the Najib government so weak that "salt and water bottles" (which was all that some of the peaceful Bersih 3.0 protestors were armed that day to defend themselves against any police tear gas and chemically-laced water cannons) could even topple it?

Nazri was deadly serious in his reply, saying "Don't underrate salt and water bottles" saying that in Tunisia, the government was toppled by handphones when it did not have the support of the people.

The secret is now out – the Prime Minister and the three former IGPs have absolutely no evidence whatsoever to back the wild and reckless allegation that Bersih 3.0 rally was a coup attempt to topple the government by force, but the Najib government is mortally afraid of "salt and water bottles" because they can topple governments which have lost support of the people.

The challenge to Najib is to find out why despite all the big talk of transformations in various aspects of national life in the past three years, he is losing rather than gaining popular support.

As I repeated in Parliament this morning, the government's misjudgment and mishandling of Bersih 3.0 and continuing demonization of Bersih 3.0 organisers and Pakatan Rakyat is an even bigger public relations disaster than the government's initial misjudgment and mishandling of Bersih 2.0 rally of July 9, 2011.

For a start, Najib and three former IGPs Hanif, Rahim and Musa should have the decency to publicly apologise for the baseless allegation that Bersih 3.0 was a coup attempt.

Secondly, the government should dissolve the Hanif "independent advisory panel" inquiring into Bersih 3.0 violence and brutality, unless the panel's has a secret agenda and term of reference - to come out with a finding that Bersih 3.0 rally was a coup attempt by the Opposition to topple the government by force.

Instead, the government should give full support to the Suhakam inquiry into Bersih 3.0 to find out what went wrong on April 28 to result in the violence and brutality which marred a peaceful and momentous gathering of Malaysians regardless of race, religion, class, region, age or gender in support of a common national cause – a clean election!

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