

Stop pre-rally clampdown, Kit Siang tells Hishammuddin

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By Clara Chooi

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 6 — With Bersih 2.0 and the government having reached a truce yesterday, DAP’s Lim Kit Siang now wants the Home Ministry to cease its nationwide pre-rally clampdown exercise.

Lim, a leader in the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) presidential council, said in a statement today that the police should end its “harassment” of Bersih 2.0 supporters, return all seized Bersih 2.0 paraphernalia and grant an unconditional release of all those detained in connection with the rally.

He expressed disappointment that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had not made the order himself yesterday, when the latter was commenting on the latest developments surrounding the rally debacle.

“The statement by the Prime Minister, passing the buck to the police to decide whether to proceed with its nation-wide pre-Bersih rally clampdown on supporters, is most irresponsible.

“Najib should know that as Prime Minister, he must always be reminded of the injunction: ‘The buck stops here!’,” said Lim.

In a brief press conference at his office in Putrajaya yesterday, shortly after Bersih 2.0 officials were granted audience with the King, Najib announced that the government was ready to meet with Bersih 2.0 officials to decide on a rally venue for this Saturday.

The prime minister expressed relief that all three street demonstrations planned for July 9 had been called off but would not say if his administration would now consider Bersih 2.0 a lawful organisation and would stop arresting supporters in connection with the rally.

With Najib having passed the buck to the police, Lim said Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein should give the ceasefire order to his men in the police force, adding that this would be in respect of the King's advice.

He listed four requests on Hishammuddin — release all those detained in connection with the rally, release Sungai Siput MP Dr Michael Jeyakumar and five other Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) members detained under the Emergency Ordinance, return all seized Bersih 2.0 paraphernalia and appoint a senior police officer to liaise with Bersih 2.0 on its stadium rally this Saturday.

Lim also cited the King's words on Sunday when the latter said, "When any problem arises, we as a civilised society must resolve it through consultations and not follow our emotions.

"I also urge the government to carry out everything that is entrusted to it by the people in a just and wise manner, and it is important that I, as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, do not want to see this country with a plural society in a situation where there is animosity among them or a section of the people being enemies with the government, on whatever grounds."

"If the King's advice is not heeded, both Hishammuddin and the police run the risk of being regarded by large sections of Malaysians as being defiant and even disloyal to his commands.

"This will be unprecedented and the last thing that Malaysia needs under Najib's 1 Malaysia concept," said Lim.

In an unprecedented move on Sunday, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin stepped in to diffuse tension by advising the Najib administration and Bersih 2.0 to hold consultations over the issue of free and fair elections, which is the objective of the coalition's rally.

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