

Kit Siang: Revoke Bersih ban before claiming 'best democracy'
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 18 – Lim Kit Siang told Datuk Seri Najib Razak today to revoke the ban on Bersih 2.0 and drop all charges against those arrested in connection with the outlawed coalition before the prime minister can claim of wanting to be the best democratic system in the world.

Bersih groups 62 organisations calling for free and fair elections but was made illegal on July 1, eight days ahead of its rally that drew thousands much to the chagrin of the Najib administration.

“Najib should stop the charade of claiming to want to be the ‘best democracy in the world’ when what he should do is to immediately end Malaysia’s ranking as a ‘flawed democracy’ before Malaysia could qualify to rank among the full democracies in the world,” the DAP leader (picture) said in a statement today.

It was reported earlier today that Najib said the repeal of the Internal Security Act (ISA) was part of efforts to make Malaysia the best democracy in the world.

At a Raya open house in Pekan, the PM said the repeal of the ISA was possible at this time because of the success in developing the nation, the increasing maturity of the people and the greater awareness of human rights in society, adding that it was not due from pressure from any quarter.

But Lim pointed out that the third edition of the Economist Intelligence Unit’s (EIU) Democracy Index 2010 released early this year categorised Malaysia as a “flawed democracy” due to “a gradual erosion of civil liberties and political culture in the past year” and the overall country ranking falling from 68th to 71st out of 167 countries.

Only two Asian countries, South Korea and Japan were listed under countries with full democracies, out of 26.

The Ipoh Timur MP said the EIU’s Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture.

“The condition of having free and fair competitive elections, and satisfying related aspects of political freedom, is regarded as the sine quo non of all definitions of a democracy.

“This is the most powerful vindication for the Bersih 2.0 peaceful rally for free and fair elections on July 9 and an indictment of the high-handed and undemocratic repression of the Bersih 2.0 campaign by the Najib administration,” Lim said.

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