

## **IGP says Jan 9 rally not banned, but wants 'proper' venue**

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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 5 — Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar gave his word today that police won't ban the January 9 rally at High Court, but has asked the organisers to negotiate with them on a suitable venue.

"We are not disallowing the gathering and do not want to be viewed as such, we only want the gathering in a proper place," he was quoted by The Star as saying.

"I have told the city police chief to call upon the organisers of the rally to discuss a proper place to meet for a gathering," he added.

Ismail (picture) said he was aware of efforts to rally crowds of people near the Jalan Duta High Court this Monday, the same time judge datuk Mohd Zabidin Mohd Diah will deliver a decision on Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy charge.

"In light of this, the police are ever ready to ensure the safety and security of the public and property, especially if it involves public order and safety of the nation. We will respond to the situation accordingly.

"We will advise the crowds to disperse and if they do not heed our advice, we will use various elements of crowd dispersal if the situation requires it.

He called on the public to be mature and objective, regardless of the outcome of the High Court verdict.

"I urge the public not to disrupt public order and national safety. Please act according to the law. Our police on duty will be fair and just," he said.

PKR's deputy president Azmin Ali announced on Tuesday that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will be amassing a rally of over 100,000 people in a show support for Anwar next Monday when the High Court delivers its decision for Sodomy 2.

Anwar, 64, is charged with sodomising former male aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan at a condominium in upscale Damansara Heights in June 2008, a few months before returning from a decade in the political wilderness and winning back his Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat.

This represents the second time he has been prosecuted for sodomy.

If found guilty, he could spend up to 20 years behind bars but will escape the caning penalty as he is over 60. It would effectively spell the end of his political career and his chance to be prime minister.

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