

Samad Said made Bersih co-chairman
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 17 — National laureate Datuk A. Samad Said will be named Bersih's new co-chairman today in a move to add some weight to the electoral reform coalition's fight for fair and clean elections.

Bersih chairman Datuk S. Ambiga told The Malaysian Insider that the coalition will make a formal announcement of the writer and poet's appointment at a press conference today at the Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH).

File photo of Samad (right) with a companion at the Bersih gathering in the city on July 9, 2011. — Picture by Choo Choy May

"Yes. I confirm that but we also have some other announcements," she said when asked whether Samad's appointment had been made official.

The 76-year old, best known for his novel "Salina", declined to confirm the matter, but said that he was busy with "major plans" for Bersih.

"I cannot say or confirm anything, but there will be an announcement, come and you will see," he told The Malaysian Insider yesterday.

The white-haired and bearded literary icon drew nationwide attention after his poem "Unggun Bersih", read at the launch of Bersih 2.0, earned him a trip to the police station for questioning.

He was also among the thousands of Malaysians who braved the streets of the city capital on July 9 to demand a fair and clean elections process.

Samad has already been named as Bersih co-chairman in recent press releases to the media.

"Tomorrow's press conference will be about me, but I am not aware of the details... I have also been asked to be there earlier, before the press conference begins," he added.

The Malaysian Insider also understands Bersih will announce its new campaign later today as well as the response to the current performance of the parliamentary select committee (PSC) which was tasked last year with looking into electoral reform recommendations.

"We are announcing new campaign and our expectations of the PSC and reforms," Ambiga told The Malaysian Insider.

Samad was named Pejuang Sastera after receiving the 1979 Southeast Asia Write Award, and received the title of national laureate in 1986.

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