

PM: We will tell all
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FULL INVESTIGATION: Govt to show what really happened during Saturday's rally

KUALA LUMPUR: THE government, through the police and Home Ministry, will show what really happened during Saturday's Bersih rally, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said last night.

He said this was because some parties were trying to influence the public with their versions of the event on the Internet and this could affect the attitudes and beliefs of people.

Police, he said, would investigate those responsible for inciting the violence on Saturday.

Najib hoped they would do it quickly, adding that police would look at allegations that their officers had treated members of the media violently.

Speaking after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting, he said police were compiling recordings of the incidents, adding there was no reason for the police to restrict public access to them, as police "have no reason to cover up". "The IGP (Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar) will elaborate on this at a press conference tomorrow (today)."

He said the use of tear gas and water cannons, which was challenged by some parties, was taken into account following the opinions of health experts that they would not affect people's health.

"If there had been a physical clash, the number of those injured would have been more if we had not dispensed with them (tear gas and water cannon). In more serious cases, lives could be lost. That is a possibility that cannot be pushed aside."

Najib said street demonstrations were influenced by uncontrollable factors, including the presence of more extreme participants and those looking to cause trouble, and that was why the government had refused Bersih from using Dataran Merdeka as a venue for its rally.

"Most would not be like that but even (Bersih 3.0 co-chairman Datuk S.) Ambiga admitted that she had failed to control the crowd that day."

He said the government had suggested four alternative venues, including Merdeka Stadium, which would have provided organisers better control of the situation.

"If their intention was to gather and express themselves, the venue is suitable and we allow freedom of expression, but only in the context of peaceful assembly laws."

Najib said the demonstrators had defied a court order and this showed their disregard for the law.

It may not be all (who acted in violence) but the result tarnished the rally and those involved, as well as the country's image."

He congratulated police for taking control of the situation in accordance with the new laws.

Earlier, after launching the National Education Dialogue, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Ambiga and the opposition must be held responsible for injuries and damage to properties during the rally.

He said the rally organisers were not concerned about fair and clean elections, but just wanted to paint a negative image of the government and have a confrontation with the police to make allegations of police brutality.

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