

## **72-hour clamp on Dataran**

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KUALA LUMPUR: Dataran Merdeka has been declared out of bounds to the public for 72 hours following a court order obtained by the police.

A magistrate's court issued the order, which takes effect from 12.01am this morning until 11.59pm on Monday.

The order prevents organisers of Bersih 3.0 and people from gathering at the historic square.

City police chief Deputy Comm Datuk Mohmad Salleh said the order was issued on Thursday night and meant to maintain peace and public order.

"It bars Bersih 2.0 chairman Datuk S. Ambiga, organisers and members of the public from gathering at Dataran from midnight (Friday) until May 1," he said yesterday.

The court order is being displayed on an electronic billboard at Dataran Merdeka.

"Anyone caught defying the order will be arrested and charged under Section 188 of the Penal Code, which carries a maximum fine of RM2,000 or six months' jail or both upon conviction," he said.

Aside from Dataran Merdeka, the other areas covered under the court order include Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin, Jalan Raja and Jalan Kelab.

Asked about those who planned to gather at other locations, including Masjid Negara, Brickfields, Jalan Sultan, Pasar Seni and KLCC, DCP Mohmad said they were free to do so provided they did not march to Dataran Merdeka.

"Processions are illegal according to the Peaceful Assembly Act and we will take appropriate action," he said.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) said it would "try its best" not to close any road leading to Dataran Merdeka.

"We will inform the public if any road is closed. We will do our best to ensure public safety. Our advice is not to march on the main roads but use the sidewalks," mayor Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad Ismail said.

He said City Hall had never disallowed the rally but only wanted it to be held at a more suitable location.

Meanwhile, Bersih 3.0 gatherings planned at various states are expected to go ahead today despite some state authorities rejecting the venues proposed.

In Ipoh, supporters are expected to gather at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Recreational Park (Polo Ground).

In Seremban, participants have been told to be at Dataran Seremban from 2pm to 5pm.

In Malacca, supporters have insisted on holding a gathering at Dataran Pahlawan in Bandar Hilir despite the state government offering two alternative venues Fatimah Stadium in the city and the Hang Jebat Stadium in Kerubong.

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