

**Bersih rally a 'public relations disaster' for Najib, says Kit Siang**  
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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 4 — DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said the government's "gross mishandling" of last Saturday's Bersih rally is a "public relations disaster" for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

The peaceful Bersih sit-in protest turned violent in the afternoon when police attempted to control the crowd after some protesters breached the barricades at Dataran Merdeka.

Lim (picture) said that "the excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of police force" on the protesters and reporters during the rally could not be justified.

"No reasonable and thinking Malaysian would buy Najib's blame yesterday alleging that Bersih 3.0 organisers were responsible for last Saturday's violence," the Ipoh Timor MP said.

The prime minister yesterday seemed to blame the organisers for the violence, saying if they had accepted the government's Stadium Merdeka offer, "these things would not have happened at all".

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein had earlier said that police acted with the "utmost restraint" and efficiency in handling the Bersih 3.0 protest.

Lim also said that the government's stand raises doubt that an impartial "public inquiry into the Bersih 3.0 violence and brutality regardless of the victims – whether the police, journalists or peaceful protesters" — can be carried out.

Police had fired tear gas and chemical-laced water on the protesters and reportedly assaulted reporters and seized their equipment.

However, some unruly Bersih protesters had also defied police orders to disperse even after the rally ended.

They continued challenging and taunting the police and were seen attacking the police with broken bottles, mineral water bottles and broken concrete slabs.

Several foreign media reports have predicted that the Najib administration may have to postpone the 13th general election due to a possible negative backlash on the government over its handling of last Saturday's protest.

Yesterday, the prime minister brushed off such speculation, saying that the election date depends on how the people view the government.

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bersih-rally-a-public-relations-disaster-for-najib-says-kit-siang/>