

Putrajaya's JASA slams Bersih 3.0 as an opposition plot
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 2 — The Department of Special Affairs (JASA) has criticised electoral reform movement Bersih and its sit-in protest last April as an opposition plot, Chinese-language daily *Sin Chew* reported today.

The agency under the Information, Communications and Culture Ministry made its criticisms in a 322-page booklet titled "Panduan Penjelasan Isu Semasa (Guide Explaining Current Affairs)" that was distributed free-of-charge to the public, the newspaper reported.

In the booklet prepared by JASA's Panel Pemikir, a question-and-answer section on the Bersih 3.0 rally last April appeared to attack the gathering for electoral reform.

"Bersih 3.0 rally's true purpose is the opposition's plot, [an] attempt to attack the image of the Election Commission and the government led by Prime Minister Najib; the eight demands have a political purpose and have no connection with the reform of Malaysia's election," *Sin Chew* quoted the booklet, which was published in the Malay language.

Bersih had pushed for its eight demands to be fulfilled in order to have free and fair elections, including the call for a clean electoral roll.

The Chinese-language paper also reported that the booklet said Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had caused the chaos in the aftermath of the rally.

Last April, the peaceful sit-in protest in the nation's capital ended in chaos, with the police using tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd, after rally participants allegedly breached the barricades around Dataran Merdeka.

According to *Sin Chew*, one of the 17 answers on Bersih stated that the rally in Kuala Lumpur only attracted 25,000 participants, contrasting with Bersih co-chair Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan's alleged statement before the rally that 300,000 would turn up.

The booklet also claimed that there were rally participants who purportedly admitted that they were paid RM100 each to show up and provided with three days' food and accommodation, *Sin Chew* reported.

The booklet included the results of a face-to-face survey carried out last May at the Himpunan Sejuta Belia among 15,686 youths which asked for their opinion on, among other things, the Bersih 3.0 rally.

The survey results indicated that 54 per cent felt that the actions of the rally participants had exceeded the legal limits, while 43 per cent thought that the police had carried out their duties professionally on the day of the rally.

Those who felt that the government should take stern action in future street protests stood at 64 per cent, the survey results showed.

The survey was carried out on citizens aged between 15 and 40 years old, mostly male at 57.47 per cent and largely composed of Malay respondents at 82.34 per cent, while those from the Chinese and Indian community stood at 10 per cent and 3.94 per cent.

Sin Chew reported that the booklet, which also promotes the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government's concepts such as 1 Malaysia, elaborates on 22 current affairs, including hot issues such as the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal, the Lynas rare earth plant, Sabah's illegal immigrants and the purchase of Scorpene submarines.

In the booklet's preface, JASA's head reportedly said the publication was intended to help the public understand the true situation, saying that some issues have been twisted by irresponsible groups.

Also included in the booklet is a disclaimer that says the views published do not necessarily reflect the agency's stand.

The booklet is listed as a 2012 publication on JASA's official website, with a [link](#) for those who want to read the electronic version.

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