

**Najib, Anwar invited to present manifesto at Bersih 2.0 forum**  
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**By Zurairi AR**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 11 — A forum will be held by Bersih 2.0 next week to allow both Barisan Nasional (BN) and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to present their manifestos, the election watchdog announced today.

According to the group, Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has accepted its invitation to present PR's manifesto, while BN chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak has been invited but has yet to reply.

"It's not a debate ... We don't want anyone to be put off, we want everyone to be comfortable with the format," said Bersih 2.0 co-chair Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan (picture) at a press conference here.

The event will be held on April 17 in the Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH) here. It will start at 8.45pm.

Ambiga insisted that the event will still go on even if Najib refuses to participate or BN fails to send a representative.

"We will make sure that it is not one-sided," Ambiga said, explaining that someone will be chosen to represent BN if that happens.

Bersih 2.0 also announced that they have set up a special committee to monitor violations of code of conduct and guidelines that the group has outlined.

The committee will issue regular reports highlighting the abuse of power by caretaker federal and state governments, which it said have an advantage over resources as the incumbent.

In a forum organised by the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) last night, political rivals had affirmed the need for a free and fair space to hear both sides' manifesto.

PR had previously snubbed the offer by interim Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim to make its pitch to voters through a 10-minute block on Radio Television Malaysia (RTM).

"I think the best way forward is for a third party to come forward and negotiate, and the TV being the host," Umno's Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah told reporters here last night.

Rais had yesterday said that the 10-minute airtime given to PR was "suitable", and that the short time offered to PR was more than enough to showcase PR's pledges.

Leaders from the opposition pact said it had wanted the right of reply, not only during the general elections, but at all times in all of the mainstream media and TV stations, almost all of which are BN-controlled.

Meanwhile, the Elections Commission (EC) claimed the offer was to be serial and not one-off and said the opposition had misunderstood government's intention.

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