

Nothing racist about 'red shirt' rally, says Zahid
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By Eileen Ng

The September 16 "red shirt" rally did not have any racially tinged elements, said Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Zahid (pic, right) said police had conducted investigations and discovered that pictures of racially tinged banners that went viral on social media had not come from the organisers.

"There is not one banner that was racially tinged or touched on any other religion.

"What went viral on social media, we have investigated and there is not a single banner that was racially tinged, it was by other parties," he said while winding up the debate on Budget 2016.

He said what had happened was that the banners had been edited and taken from elsewhere.

He also said the Kuala Lumpur gathering, known as Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu, had not featured any sensitive or racially tinged speeches.

"I am not accusing quarters that are against the reds, but I know from the police that it did not originate from the 'red shirt' rally," he said.

The "red shirt" rally was held to counter the Bersih 4 gathering which was held from August 29 to 30.

The "red shirt" organisers said Bersih had insulted the Malays, especially over footage of Bersih 4 participants stomping on pictures of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

Reports said the rally saw incendiary remarks and racially charged banners and placards as well as some tense moments where participants were upset over questions asked by some journalists.

Riot police also sprayed chemical-laced water on a group of rowdy rally goers who attempted to breach police barricades to gain access to Petaling Street.

Najib had justified the rally, saying it was a manifestation of the rise of Malays to defend their dignity and the country's leadership from being condemned and humiliated. – November 4, 2015.

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