

PM: Election Watch a political gimmick

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described Election Watch, an informal group of six Malaysians who claimed it was formed to ensure a free and fair election in the country, as an extension of the opposition and its activity as a political gimmick.

"They are anti-Government," the Prime Minister told reporters at the Kuala Lumpur international airport upon arrival from Lusaka, where he met black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela. "What is there to watch?" he asked.

Election Watch comprises former Lord President Tun Mohamad Suffian Hashim as leader, former Auditor-General Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin Zakaria, former Bar Council chairmen Raja Addruse and Datuk Param Kumaraswamy, Aliran president Chandra Muzaffar and lawyer Chooi Mun Sou.

The group was quoted to have said that recent allegations of wrongdoings had raised doubts in the electoral process. It met Election Commission chairman Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Talib earlier this week for a discussion.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the

group is out to criticise the Government, and if possible, it wants to discredit the country to the extent that the investors will be deterred away.

"If there are Malaysians who like to see this, they can support the group ... the group is not neutral. This is a political gimmick, it is an extension of the opposition," he added.

The Prime Minister said the Bar Council, which has members in Election Watch, has not contribute positively to the country.

"They said we must respect the court, but they want to put the Lord President behind bars on a cooked-up charge. They think they are very powerful, can go all over the world and blacken Malaysia's name.

"If they are in power, they will abuse it," he added.

On the appointment of the Director of Internal Security and Public Order, Datuk Haji Mohamed Yassin Jaafar, as Director-General of Prisons from yesterday, the Prime Minister said it is aimed at instilling better discipline, system and administration in prisons.

"We want to have organised administration, which is now rather loose," he added.