

# DEMO DANGER

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## PM: Street protesters will drive Malaysia into the hands of foreigners

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Street demonstrators who are trying to topple the Government will indirectly drive Malaysia into the hands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), enabling foreigners to take over local companies, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

They might not know it but that

is exactly what they are doing, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

"The demonstrators don't seem to realise that politics has an economic dimension to it.

"In fact, they must not separate the political dimension from the economic as far as the Western agenda is concerned," he said.

He said the protesters thought they could overthrow the Government through continuous street protests, like what happened in Indonesia.

"They think they can do it continuously in Malaysia by increasing the level of violence. We can see the pattern and there is even some Indonesian involvement," he told a press conference at his office.

Supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and members of the opposition parties who are trying to gain political mileage from the situation have been demonstrating in the city, calling on Dr Mahathir to resign.

However, the Prime Minister did not see the current situation as an

excuse to call for an early general election, saying it would have the effect of undermining the programmes to ensure economic progress.

"This is what they (foreigners) want. If they (the protesters) can win, the country will have to follow the IMF. Malaysia will then submit to the IMF," he said.

"Look at what happened in Indonesia. Following the massive demonstrations and the overthrow of the government, Indonesia now

has to open up totally, allowing unimpeded entry to foreign investors to take control of their companies," he added.

The IMF, despite its recent capitulation to Dr Mahathir's view of having lower interest rates to kick-start the economy, has been prescribing measures which have resulted in devastation of the economies and people of the countries it was supposed to help.

● TURN TO PAGE TWO

# Crony capitalism 'when West is left out'

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## ● FROM PAGE ONE

The IMF's bailout for American and European companies in East Asian economies had resulted in mass unemployment, price increases and social ills.

Dr Mahathir said that during his visit to Japan, he came to realise that the term "crony capitalism," which was invented by the West and propagated by their media, was to vilify Asian governments which did not allow US and European companies to participate fully in their economies.

He said South Korea, despite receiving IMF's aid, was still considered to be practising crony capitalism because of its refusal to open up its economy totally.

"In Malaysia and most Asian countries, privatisation means (projects being privatised) from the Government to the local private sector."

"Because the foreigners did not get the contracts freely, they call us crony capitalists. For them, crony capitalism means no foreign participation."

"All the while I thought crony capitalism was helping friends and family. Now I know that as long as foreigners do not have the right to come in unimpeded, we are accused of being crony capitalists," he added.

Asked how the country could avoid "colonisation" via the economy, he said Malaysians must be

judges to act in a manner so that the courts would be seen as independent.

The Prime Minister said the Government was ready for elections, stating that whether it won or lost, everybody should accept the result through such a democratic exercise.

He, however, said that demonstrators were trying to bring down the Government through street protests which were affecting the daily lives of other people.

"They are trying to provoke the police to become violent so that the foreign media can take pictures of police brutality."

"They are also trying to force the police to arrest (Anwar Ibrahim's wife) Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and her daughter so that the world will see Malaysia as an oppressive country," he said.

Dr Mahathir also pointed out how Western observers tried to exaggerate the political situation in Malaysia, citing an article written by former Hong Kong governor Chris Patten who said that "Anwar was beaten to a pulp."

This, he said, was totally untrue and everybody in Malaysia knew Anwar's health condition.

"That is, however, only expected. Chris Patten had also said that Anwar was the darling of the Western world and, as such, it is probably his duty to defend Anwar," he said.

aware of the moves.

"We do not want to bow to them. They will exert this through the WTO (World Trade Organisation). I also expect them to use Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation)," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia also continued to receive bad press, particularly when the foreign media and the so-called foreign observers had turned the court case of Anwar into the trial of the Government of Malaysia.

"The Government is on trial as far as the foreign media is concerned. They are not concerned whether Anwar is guilty or not but they want to make sure the Government or the courts are guilty (if Anwar is convicted)."

"This is interference with our judicial and legal system. If you intimidate the judge, you will see no justice," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the foreign media tried to portray a situation where the court would be unfair if the accused was found guilty, thus forcing the