

500,000 were at Bersih 4, says organiser

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The organiser of Bersih 4 sees the event as a huge success and that approximately 500,000 people had taken part in the rally.

"The total number of people who participated in Bersih 4, for the entire 34 hours, is estimated at 500,000," Bersih secretariat head Maria Chin Abdullah said at a press conference today.

Maria said Bersih, a coalition of NGOs pushing for electoral reforms, would consider hosting Bersih 5 if the demands made during the weekend's rally are not met.

"We will consider it. (But for now) we would like to reiterate our demands until they are fulfilled.

"We don't just want the prime minister to step down, but also to reform our institutions," she said.

The 34-hour rally on Saturday and Sunday saw tens of thousands of participants gathering, mainly along Jalan Tun Perak and aroundf Dataran Merdeka.

However, police estimates suggest that only 25,000 people took part on the first day.

Dr M's agenda

Meanwhile, Maria said she and the Bersih secretariat members were prepared for possible arrests, adding that their legal team was on standby.

On Dr Mahathir Mohamad's brief appearances at the rally, Maria's deputy Sarajun Hoda said the former prime minister had his own agenda.

"Firstly, he wants to see Najib step down. Secondly, he wants BN to be in power," said Sarajun.

Mahathir first visited the protest grounds on Saturday evening, stating that he was witnessing "people's power" and that the protesters should carry on.

Yesterday, Mahathir made another appearance, but made it clear that he was not supportive of Bersih's cause, which includes extensive institutional reforms to prevent abuse of power.

However, Mahathir said that street demonstrations were justifiable as a last resort, citing how Filipinos had to take to the streets to depose dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

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