

## **Dr M slams Anwar's street politics**

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Since his foray into the world of politics, Anwar Ibrahim has frequently 'used' people to further his personal cause through street demonstrations, said former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

According to Mahathir, the culture of street politics hit its peak here when he sacked Anwar as deputy prime minister in 1998.

"Every week, demonstrations were held (then)," added the 82-year-old statesman in his blog.

Going back further, Mahathir recalled how Anwar had 'incited' university students to hold a street demonstration in 1974 when the former was appointed education minister.

Mahathir's latest blog entry comes nearly a week after opposition leaders such as Anwar took to the streets with tens of thousands of people to protest against the Internal Security Act.

The mammoth rally clogged Kuala Lumpur's traffic arteries as police fired tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd.

Government leaders were quick to criticise the protest, which the authorities claimed resulted in losses amounting to hundreds of millions.

Although Mahathir described street demonstrations as a 'foreign culture', he conceded there were times when this method was used when all other alternatives failed.

"In pressing situations and when there is no other way, then street demonstrations have to be held. Like during the fight against Malayan Union, the Malays demonstrated," he said.

"But when other avenues are wide open, then demonstrations should not be the option," he added.

Tarnish the nation

Mahathir said the government is not the only 'victim' of demonstrations, but businessmen and petty traders are also affected.

Apart from this, the former premier said demonstrations also impede national development as investors, both local and foreign, would have reservations.

Defending the police's action, Mahathir said demonstrators often 'invite' trouble by pushing the police to the point of using tear gas and batons to restore calm

"This will tarnish the image of the country and the police. The situation will make Anwar very happy because this is what he will tell foreigners.

"He will say Malaysia is undemocratic, cruel and there is no freedom for the people," he added.

Over in the west, Mahathir said, there are those who would be delighted if Malaysia is not developed.

"Their names are (Paul) Wolfowitz, (William S) Cohen and others who are Anwar's close friends," he added.

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