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# 'Ex-PM shielding himself from criticism'

**GOPENG:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad participated in the Bersih rally to protect himself from being attacked by the opposition, said Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa.

He added that there were scandals during Dr Mahathir's tenure as prime minister, so he needed a way to shield himself from criticism.

"Umno used to defend Dr Mahathir, but now that he is no longer backed by the party, he has resorted to joining the very people who had criticised his leadership," Annuar said after the Umno Grassroots Road Tour programme at the Rural Transformation Centre here yesterday.

He claimed that Dr Mahathir had "lost" to currency speculator George Soros, whom the former had infamously described as a "moron" during the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Soros has been linked to funding activities for Bersih.

"During that time, Soros tried to

bring Dr Mahathir down through economic (and ringgit) crises. Now, the latter is involved in Bersih. Between Soros and Dr Mahathir, Soros emerged as the winner."

In **Kuala Kangsar**, MIC president Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said the arrests of Bersih figures should not be construed as controversial as the police were doing their job to ensure peace.

He said the police did not pick people up for no reason.

"If that is the best decision (to detain the individuals), then they will do it. That is under their jurisdiction and we can't question it.

"They are just doing their jobs as police officers," Dr Subramaniam said before handing over a mock cheque of RM1 million for the construction of the Thirusula Maha Mariamman temple here yesterday.

MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said Bersih had deviated from its original objective, and was

now employed by the opposition as a political tool to topple the government.

"Bersih is no longer championing free and fair elections. Malaysians do not support activities that cause disharmony," Liow said after opening Federation of Fochow Associations Malaysia's annual general meeting here.

Liberal Democratic Party Youth chief Tsang Hieng Yee said Bersih organisers broke the law as they did not obtain a permit from the police.

"The organisers seem not to care about the requirements and are determined to carry on with the rally. By doing so, they are breaking the law. The same goes to rally participants.

"Malaysians are advised to lead by example, especially for the younger generation, because once this habit and culture (of holding rallies) is embedded in our society, we are doomed."

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Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said said Bersih had failed to bring significant change to politics and public policies.

She said Bersih should not abuse the fundamental rights conferred under Article 10 of the Federal Constitution to assemble peacefully and without arms, under the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012.

"Opposition leaders behind Bersih are a motley crew of former enemies driven by self-interest, not the greater good of society."

Umno Supreme Council member, Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom said voting was the only legitimate way to bring about a regime change.

"People can cast their votes in the general election if they are unhappy with the administration. Voting is the only lawful way to express your thoughts," he said at the opening of a new religious primary school in Sungai Ara, Penang, yesterday.