

Mahathir differs with Marina on Bersih crackdown
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By Lee Wei Lian

KUALA LUMPUR, July 6 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that he “doesn’t often agree” with his daughter when asked today about Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir’s recent condemnation of the government’s crackdown on the Bersih rally.

Marina had on July 4 blasted the authorities’ move to arrest rally supporters for wearing Bersih T-shirts, saying that the arrests portrayed the country as “third world or less” and were a sign that the government was running scared.

“I give the freedom of democracy to my daughter,” Mahathir said in a press conference today. “That is her right.”

Mahathir said that while demonstrations were a freedom afforded by a democracy, it was something that should be used as a last resort.

“I notice that their (Bersih) demands can be settled in other ways,” he said.

The former prime minister said that in Egypt, the multiple demonstrations that took earlier this year had affected the economy and tourism was down 20 per cent.

“This is damaging to the country,” he said.

Dr Mahathir added that if the people were unhappy over the government’s crackdown, it would be reflected in the polls.

“If people feel (the government) is oppressive, they may lose votes,” he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that for him, the important thing was for the opposition to still win elections in the country.

“In other countries, the opposition cannot win,” he said. “That is a measure of whether an election is proper. Cheating is done by both sides.”

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