

Dr M: Bersih an opposition tool to run down government
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PUTRAJAYA, April 30 —Last Saturday's tumultuous Bersih rally was part of the opposition's agenda to unseat the ruling government and not to reform the country's electoral system, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad asserted today.

"The demonstration is actually for regime change where they (the opposition) want to show Malaysia as unstable and prevent foreign investment in this country. They want this country to become a poor country again.

"It is not to shape a fair election system," insisted Dr Mahathir during a question-and-answer session after the launch of the Bahasa Malaysia version of his memoir, "Doktor Umum, Memoir Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad".

The ex-premier added that "the opposition is also very glad if foreigners come to Malaysia and bomb this country, they will say, see what I have done to this country."

He said the present government was duly elected by the people, but Bersih and the opposition are trying to gain the world's attention and depict Malaysia as being under dictatorial rule.

"They like foreigners to pay attention to this country and urge for the government to be changed. This Bersih rally will also not stop elections from happening," he added.

"This is a country where the opposition never loses; the opposition actually wins in every election."

He said Election 2008 saw the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) winning five states despite failing to wrest control of the federal government. Perak, one of the five, returned to Barisan Nasional in 2009 following a series of defections.

"They [had] five states including Kelantan and Kedah. But they just fail to conquer the central government."

Dr Mahathir said the opposition's 2008 revival after being nearly wiped out in Election 2004 disproved their allegations that the electoral system was unfair.

"Although the ruling government controlled over 90 percent of votes during the general elections in 2004, but what happened in 2008 is that the opposition succeeded in denying them two-thirds majority," he said.

Saturday's Bersih rally for free and fair elections turned chaotic when Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) personnel began firing tear gas and water cannons after demonstrators breached police lines in their attempt to reach Dataran Merdeka.

The event was initially planned for the historic square but authorities had secured a court order on Friday barring its use for public assemblies until May 1, forcing Bersih supporters to splinter into groups.

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