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Ultimately it is people who make or break a system

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I REFER to the front page story (NST, May 29), regarding what the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said about the free market system.

He has correctly come to a conclusion that the system must be re-evaluated in the light of what is happening not only in our country and the region but globally as well.

America, Europe and other countries seemingly untouched by the current economic problem will eventually feel the impact as well because of the globalisation or intertwining of economies.

It should be recognised that globalisation gives a false sense of well being when times are good but just the opposite when times are bad.

Yes, the system has to be examined but we have to go beyond that. There is one important factor that we ignore at our own peril - people who make or break a system. It is people who abuse the system for their own selfish ends.

So any examination must go to the root of the problem - the policies and instruments that frame the system and the thinking that goes into such a framework.

Policy-makers will have to examine the very basis of their work.

And unless people as a whole change the way they think and act in relation to their surroundings, no system they put in place (let it be feudalism, capitalism or socialism) will achieve the desired results.

Simply put, we must recognise our own flaws before we formulate. We must also recognise that given our shortcomings no man-made system will ever be perfect.