

Changes to voting laws routine: PM

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Registration not automatic but open year-round

By **R. Manirajan**

PUTRAJAYA, Thurs: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described the amendments to the Federal Constitution regarding voter registration as "only routine and nothing radical".

The cabinet yesterday decided against an automatic voter registration but gave the green light for the implementation of year-round registration.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim said amendments to Article 119 of the Federal Constitution on qualification of voters will be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat's current session by the prime minister.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the National Information Technology Council's 11th meeting here today, Mahathir said matters concerning voter registration have to be clear cut.

Currently, he said, there are too many questions and uncertainties.

Asked about automatic registration for 21-year-olds, Mahathir said this may lead to the problem

of phantom voters.

On the government's decision to approve an average 51.8% increase in MAS fares for Peninsular Malaysia and its effect on the tourism industry, he said MAS is incurring huge losses and it would be unfair to ask a commercial entity to subsidise for the people.

"If we are going to sell MAS to people or get people to invest, they will not invest if they are asked to subsidise fares."

Mahathir said people should realise that in Malaysia, the charges for most things, including toll rates, are cheap, compared with other countries.