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Need to review present election system, says PM

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants the current election system, monitored by the Election Commission, to be reviewed as there are many loopholes in it. Dr Mahathir was responding to the recent case in Sabah involving former chief minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee.

Yong lost his Likas seat after the Election Court ruled that the electoral roll used for the constituency in March 1999 state elections was tainted with illegal voters.

"Not only in Likas, it also happened in the Lunas general election. People cannot vote because their names are not listed in the commission's voting list," he told a press conference in Subang after returning from a four-day private visit to Japan.

There were also cases where voters who have moved out from their constituencies failed to inform the commission.

"For example, there are thousands of Kelantanese who have moved to Kuala Lumpur, but are still voting in Kelantan. By right, they should be voting in the area where they are currently living," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the ruling party is in the process of drafting questions and proposal to be submitted to the Election Commission, to seek an explanation on these cases and to propose changes to be made in the current system.

"Sometimes, the ruling party is also not happy with the Election Commission's decision, that is why we need to question them back," he said.

The Prime Minister also stressed that the Government is not trying to interfere in the Election Commission or the country's judiciary system, but wants to ensure transparency in both systems.

"Of course we would like to have an independent and transparent judiciary system... and the Government does not intend to interfere," he said.

Meanwhile, during his four-day stay in Japan, Dr Mahathir met with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and visited Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp's (NTT) research and development centre.

Dr Mahathir said the Koizumi gave his assurance that Japan will continue to extend loans to Malaysia for infrastructural projects.

On his visit to NTT, Dr Mahathir said that he was impressed with the company's multifunctional smartcard that could store a lot of information.

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