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Mahathir-Election

VARIOUS FACTORS IN VOTER REGISTRATION EXERCISE TO BE REVIEWED, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that various factors in the voter registration exercise need to be reviewed to ensure a fair election.

He said this included the right of a citizen to register as a voter in a constituency.

"We found that various procedures in the voter registration exercise are not foolproof.

"We always found that when elections are held, many voters are unable to vote...this occurred in Lunas when many pro-government voters were unable to vote," he told reporters at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) station in Subang near here on his return after a four-day visit to Japan.

Dr Mahathir was asked on the need for a review of the voter registration exercise following the decision of the Kota Kinabalu High Court two days ago declaring the election result in the Likas state constituency in the state election on March 13, 1999 null and void.

The seat was won by the Barisan Nasional (BN).

The High Court ruled that phantom voters were found in the electoral roll.

It also declared the electoral roll 1998 used in the constituency during the election as invalid due to the existence of phantom voters.

Following the High Court's decision, a fresh election will have to be conducted in the constituency as the Election Offences Act does not allow for an appeal.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said that the BN accepted the court's decision and would now have to prepare for a by-election.

The prime minister said that in the Lunas state by-election, many pro-government voters found their names missing from the electoral roll allegedly because they have moved out and no longer residing in the constituency.

"At the same time, we found thousands of people from Kelantan especially, living in Kuala Lumpur, still registered as voters in Kelantan.

"Why this happens we don't really know...maybe it's unintentional," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that he himself had been residing in Kuala Lumpur for over 25 years but still registered as a voter in Titi Gajah, Kedah, but nobody raised the matter.

Asked on the allegation that over 4,000 objections raised over the electoral roll in Likas were not dealt with by the Election Commission, the prime minister said that the allegation that the Election Commission had not acted on them was inappropriate.

He said that the ruling party had also raised various objections with the Election Commission and the body had responded even though some of the response given could not be readily accepted by the ruling party.

"The ruling party also felt dissatisfied over (some of) the response given and we are making queries over the clarifications given," he said.

Asked whether former Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee, who won the seat in the state election, would be fielded to defend the seat, Dr Mahathir said that the BN had not decided on the matter.

On when he would fill the post of Umno treasurer vacated by Tun Daim Zainuddin, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said that it would be done as soon as possible.

Dr Mahathir is now temporarily holding the post.

-- BERNAMA

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