

DPM: Reform panel doesn't mean election system is bad
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The setting up of the parliamentary select committee to discuss electoral reforms does not mean that the election system adopted all this while is bad, but merely to improve it further, said Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said the results of the previous elections, which were all carried out in a transparent manner, would not be disputed but would only be improved due to the inclination of certain groups who wanted it to be carried out.

"And this is also acknowledged by the Election Commission (EC) where they must update the electoral roll, strengthen the manner the polls are carried out, postal voting, so this is a process which is already ongoing.

"With the existence of the committee, all these will be taken into consideration and if there are any recommendations to be made, they will be presented so that the EC can take appropriate measures," he told reporters after presenting prizes to the winners of the National Creative Science and Mathematics Competition 2011 in Putrajaya today.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak yesterday announced the formation of the committee which would consist of representatives of the BN government and the opposition parties to discuss election reforms that need to be carried out in the 13th general election.

Najib had said that the committee to be formed in the near future was a proactive response by the BN government to tackle the dispute on free and fair elections raised by certain groups recently to the extent of creating various opinions and polemics.

Muhyiddin said the formation of the committee also reflected clearly the resoluteness of the BN government and coincided with the opinions of various groups on the need to have fair and clean elections.

Not demanded by Pakatan only

"Thus, it is not a demand by the opposition only. If we want the elections to be conducted in a clean and fair manner and we want to be elected as the government based on equitable policies, with the results it means that we are adopting a transparent attitude.

"We take the views (of the people) seriously. So, certainly the members of parliament elected from the government and opposition who are said to be meeting very soon, they will look at certain aspects in terms of the current system and how they can be further improved," he said.

Muhyiddin said the measures would involve consultation with the various groups including the EC and through consensus, the election system could certainly be strengthened further.

Commenting on Najib's statement that the government would review the media censorship policy in line with the current socio-political landscape and environment, Muhyiddin said that as media practitioners, they must maintain strong ethics.

He said journalists should not use the rights and freedom given to them to do anything to the detriment of society, create social tension or that could strain international and racial ties.

They must uphold the principles and elements based on ethics, morals and so on.

"In this borderless world where many reports are churned out not only via the official media but also the

cyber world, it is rather difficult for the Malaysian and other governments to take action to control such reports.

"This is because the question of freedom has become an individual right and no longer an institutional or national right," he said.

The deputy prime minister said the monitoring system was implemented from time to time and the government must always be sensitive so that the freedom to communicate in the cyber world did not lead to uncertainties.

He said it had been clearly proven that media practitioners who had violated any aspects of the law, security and so on were not exempted from legal action.

- Bernama

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