

Thumbs-down to electronic voting

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PUTRAJAYA: Most registered voters in the country are against an electronic voting system.

Election Commission chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman said a survey conducted by the commission showed most voters enjoyed going to the booths.

"They preferred being given a paper and a pencil to mark their ballots. That is what they want. After all, we only have about 10 million voters and they want the present manual voting system to

continue.

"With the present system, we do not have a problem getting results fast. Malaysia has had 11 general elections and so far, we have not encountered difficulties in getting ready the results on time," he said after meeting with his Uzbekistan counterpart Abdul Salomov at his office here yesterday.

Also present were Uzbekistan ambassador Aybek Khasanov and Third Secretary Aziz Nazirov.

Rashid said the survey indicated that the voters were suspicious

of the electronic voting system. "We will have problems with political parties, especially the Opposition, as they will think the system could be pre-programmed."

Rashid, however, did not dismiss the possibility that the system may be used in the future as voter population increases.

Rashid and Abdul Salomov later signed an agreement to co-operate with each other for mutual benefit.

Rashid said the commission planned to have similar co-operation with Indonesia, Philippines,

Thailand and other countries.

"We must learn from each other. Sometimes, we try to do good things but at the end of the day, it has a negative effect. So, we must learn from each other and from the international community the way elections should be run.

"It must be tuned to the needs of society and the principles of democracy," he added.

Rashid also said the commission's Election Academy would be operational next month. Commission officers and election workers will receive training there.