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EC-Election

EC MEETS ON FRIDAY TO FIX NOMINATION, POLLING DATES

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- The Election Commission will meet on Friday to decide on the dates for nomination and polling for the 10th general election, its chairman Datuk Omar Hashim said today.

He said the meeting is scheduled to start at 10am.

The commission would look for a suitable date for the election, he told reporters when asked to comment on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that he hoped the election could be held before the fasting month.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah gave his consent today for the dissolution of Parliament tomorrow to pave the way for the 10th general election.

According to election regulations, nomination can be held after nine days from the date of dissolution of Parliament or a state assembly while the polling date can be fixed seven days after nomination, at the earliest.

Omar said the 1998 Electoral Rolls with about 9.7 million voters verified on Jan 7 this year would be used for this election.

Omar said the commission's logistic preparations would also be discussed in detail during the meeting as this is the first time the general election would be held at the year-end.

He said the commission had to think of the most suitable date for this election as there were number of constraints such as the SPM and STPM examinations. The examinations will go on till Dec 13.

"We must also be prepared for the unforeseen things like floods during the monsoon season," he said.

He also said about 70 per cent of the commission's part-time workers were teachers and part of them would be examination invigilators and markers of exam papers.

The commission had recruited 109,000 part-time staff comprising teachers and clerks for the election.

He said the part-timers cannot be replaced with others as they have been trained on the conduct of the election.

Apart from that, schools would also be used as nomination and polling centres, he said.

Omar said the commission would fix nomination and polling dates most convenient to all.

The SPM/SPMV examinations would be held from Nov 22 to Dec 10.

Asked whether polling would be held on Nov 22, he said it was impossible.

On the commission's preparations for the polls, Omar said generally it was ready as preparations including at the states were made much earlier.

He said 32 political parties including the newly-registered Malaysian Democratic Party (MDP) were expected to contest in the polls.

On calls by the Opposition to scrap postal votes, Omar said it could not be abolished just like that as it had been provided for in the election laws.

"We cannot deny what has been provided for in the law. We must use postal votes if not some people will challenge us in court later for not having postal votes," he said.

Asked whether the commission will appoint any observers, he said it had not invited any groups for the purpose.

-- BERNAMA

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