

29 NOV 1999
Polling-Morning
MALAYSIANS START VOTING THIS MORNING

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysians start voting in the 10th general election this morning.

A total of 9,564,071 voters will cast their ballots at 6,931 polling centres where some 17,000 channels have been set up, throughout the country.

The polling stations opened at 8am and will close at 5.30pm in the peninsula while those in Sabah and Sarawak opened at 7.30am and will close at 5pm.

However, some polling stations, in the remote areas of Sabah and Sarawak, will be closed earlier.

The 1998 electoral rolls, which have some 70,000 new voters who registered in 1998 and verified in January this year, are being used for the general election.

A total of 192 parliamentary seats and 393 state seats will be contested. The BN already won a parliamentary seat and a state seat on nomination day on Nov 20.

In Sabah and Sarawak only the parliamentary seats will be contested. Sabah held its state election in March this year while the state election in Sarawak is not due until next year.

The Barisan Nasional, the ruling party before the dissolution of parliament and the state legislative councils on Nov 11, is contesting all the seats.

Ten political parties have fielded 1,200 candidates while 42 are contesting as independents.

The parties contesting are Parti Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (Akim), Barisan Nasional (BN), Barisan Jaamah Islamiah Semalaysia (Berjasa), DAP, Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan), Parti Demokratik Parti (MDP), PAS, Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM) and Parti Reformasi Negeri (Star).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is defending his Kubang Pasu parliamentary seat, will cast his votes at Sekolah Kebangsaan Titi Gajah in Alor Setar while Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is defending his Kepala Batas parliamentary seat, will cast his votes at Sekolah Kebangsaan Permatang Bertam in Kepala Batas.

According to Election Commission chairman Datuk Omar Mohamed Hashim, 192 vote tallying centres had been set up throughout the country.

The first results are expected to be announced at about 8.30pm.

Omar expected the party elected to form the government to be known at about 4am tomorrow.

The Meteorological Services Department has forecast showers and occasional heavy rain and thunderstorm in the peninsula especially in the East Coast states due to the north-east monsoon winds.

Omar however said that the Election Commission had made preparations in the event of floods.

Meanwhile, in the capital city, the fine weather has encouraged voters to go out in large numbers to cast their ballots.

The parties contesting in the general election are providing free transport for voters to go to the polling stations where a carnival atmosphere prevailed.

-- BERNAMA

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