

04 MAR 2004

Election-Dissolution

PARLIAMENT DISSOLVED TODAY, COUNTRY SET FOR 11TH GENERAL ELECTION

KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 (Bernama) -- The country is set for its 11th general election with parliament being officially dissolved today and the Election Commission (EC) having 60 days to conduct the polls.

Similarly, all state legislatures, except for Sarawak, have been officially dissolved to allow for simultaneous state elections. Sarawak had its state election in 2001, and the state government's terms ends only in 2006.

Article 55 of the Federal Constitution spells out that a general election must be held within 60 days of the dissolution of parliament.

Election regulations stipulate that the earliest nomination can be held is four days after the dissolution of parliament or state assembly, while the earliest polling date is seven days after nomination.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be seeking a fresh mandate from 10.3 million registered voters, five months after assuming the premiership from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in what analysts described as a "feel good" environment, politically and economically.

In a brief statement yesterday, Abdullah announced that the King has given his royal consent and signed the declaration of dissolution of parliament, paving way for fresh polls for which the nomination and polling dates will be fixed by the EC in its meeting scheduled to be held tomorrow.

The country now is being run by a caretaker government and the scheduled first sitting for this year of the previous parliament on Monday has been adjourned.

The current five-year term of the Barisan Nasional only ends in December this year.

At stake in the 11th general election will be 219 parliamentary seats and 505 seats in 12 state assemblies, expanded respectively from 194 and 394 following the periodic redrawing of electoral boundaries last year.

The BN has a comfortable two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat

after
winning 152 parliamentary seats in the 10th general election in 1999
while
in the state assemblies, the coalition has 280 seats.

-- BERNAMA

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