

05 MAR 2004
Election-Dates
POLLING DAY ON MARCH 21

PUTRAJAYA, March 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysians will go to the polls in the 11th general election on March 21, the Election Commission (EC) announced today.

The EC also fixed March 13 for nomination of candidates contesting the 219 parliamentary seats and 505 state seats, except in Sarawak.

Sarawak held its state election in 2001 and the term of the state government will only expire in 2006.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman told a media conference telecast live over television from the EC headquarters here that the election writs would be issued tomorrow while the notices would be issued the following day.

The 10th parliament was officially dissolved yesterday, nine months prior to the expiry of its five-year term to pave way for the 11th general election.

Abdul Rashid said that 27 political parties registered with the EC would be contesting in the general election.

All the state legislatures except Sarawak have also officially been dissolved to allow for the state elections to be conducted simultaneously with the general election.

The 2003 master electoral roll with 10.3 million registered voters gazetted last Wednesday will be used in the general election. The electoral roll was verified as up to Dec 31 last year.

The electoral roll contains an additional of 600,000 voters compared with the total number of voters in the last general election in 1999.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, is seeking a fresh mandate after taking over the premiership from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31 last year.

In the 1999 general election, the BN won 148 of the 193 parliamentary seats it contested but the number of seats increased to 152

following the
move by the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) to rejoin the BN in January
2002 and
the BN win in the Pendang by-election in July the same year.

The BN won 281 of the 394 state seats it contested but the
ruling
coalition lost the Lunas state seat to Keadilan in a by-election in
November 2000.

As at the dissolution of parliament yesterday, the BN has 152
parliamentary seats and 280 state seats.

The main opposition party, PAS has 26 parliamentary seats and 98
state
seats, the DAP 10 parliamentary seats and 11 state seats and
Keadilan five
parliamentary seats and five state seats.

Following the redelineation of the electoral boundaries
conducted by
the EC last year and the creation of the new Putrajaya parliamentary
constituency, there is now an additional of 26 parliamentary seats.

The redelineation exercise also created 63 new state seats,
bringing
the total to 505.

-- BERNAMA

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