

Delay polls for voter education drive, urges NGO
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Several civil society groups have demanded that the government puts off the next general election until a voter education campaign is carried out and changes proposed by the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform are implemented.

NONE "There should be a post-PSC process... at least three months to have a nationwide voter education campaign to inform the voters about new changes in the electoral system," said K Shan (left), acting chairperson of National Institute for Democracy and Electoral Integrity (NIEI).

Among others, the process should include a mock run of the implementation of indelible ink, which will make its debut in the 13th general election because the measure had created confusion in other countries' elections when it was first introduced, such as in Afghanistan, he added.

Shan made the call during the launching of the National Voter Registration Audit report in Petaling Jaya today.

Polls date must not be kept a mystery

The audit was a civil society initiative carried out last year by NIER, public opinion survey group Merdeka Center and media rights organisation Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) to study the reliability and accuracy of the electoral roll.

Shan said the election date should be indicated and not kept as a mystery by the prime minister, so as to allow the Election Commission to conduct a voter education drive on the new changes to electoral system.

The three groups will raise their demands with Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Abdul Aziz next week.

The audit report, which also reveals several major weaknesses in the electoral roll, had been presented to the PSC on electoral reform in January this year.

However, the NGOs are not certain whether their recommendations would be included in the PSC report, which is scheduled to be submitted to Parliament on Monday.

The three groups have also met three times with the EC on the findings of their voter registration audit exercise.

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