

'RM700mil for GE, but no pledge of clean polls'
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By Leven Woon

As the government moves to secure an additional RM660 million to hold the 13th general election, a PKR senator has questioned how the money will be used.

At a press conference in the Dewan Negara lobby today, Syed Husin Ali said the government yesterday sought Parliament's approval for the extra funding.

This will bring the total election budget to RM700 million, as RM40 million was allocated under Budget 2012.

"We wonder how the government is going to use the RM700 million, especially when it cannot promise that a clean election will be conducted," Syed Hussin noted.

Dubbing the additional allocation as "the largest in the nation's history", Syed Husin said some RM360 million is for the cost of holding the election, while the balance is meant for security.

"We are worried because even before the GE, there has been a lot of violence targeting Pakatan (Rakyat) ceramah sessions. How are (the authorities) going to guarantee they can ensure the security of the election?"

'Nation is restless'

On another note, Syed Husin urged the government to immediately fix the election date to end the guessing game that has been played out for a year now.

He rapped the federal government for its obsession with a snap general election, in stark contrast to the practice of other countries that announce the polling date three months to a year in advance.

"All that (the BN cares about) is whether (it will have the) advantage if a general election is held," he said.

PAS senator Muhamad Yusof Husin, who was at the press conference, said the entire nation is restless over the date of the 13th GE.

"Whether or not to have a banquet, to conduct a programme, to go for haj, to travel or even for a politician to move house - there is a dilemma over all this because the GE can be called anytime," he said, noting that civil servants are affected as well.

"If somebody is going on the haj for the first time but is named as candidate because the GE is held during haj season, what should he do?"

Yusof said he supports the idea of the federal government holding discussions on simultaneous elections with Pakatan-held states.

However, his question on this, which he raised this morning in the Dewan Negara, was not answered.

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