

EC admits previous oversight pokes hole in electoral roll

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The Election Commission (EC) has conceded that an oversight in the past has resulted in many incomplete voter addresses in the electoral roll and efforts are now being made to rectify it.

In its latest publication entitled 'The Electoral Roll: Issues and Clarifications', the EC explains the issue of voters with incomplete addresses being found in the electoral roll even though they are residing in developed states such as Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

"It is the objective of the EC to have an electoral roll with complete current addresses for all the approximately 13 million registered electors in the country. Unfortunately, the situation at the ground level does not allow the EC to do so," reads the booklet.

It reveals that a study conducted by the EC showed that applicants completing the voter registration application forms as well as relatives and others who helped to complete the forms did not give the complete address of the applicants, especially those registered prior to July 2002.

"At that time, the EC, too, did not see the need for a complete address as a priority when processing applications for registration since the format of the addresses then were in different forms, there were those that were complete and others that were too general."

In addition, the EC points out that despite the rapid development and urbanisation in several states such as Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, there remain areas including squatter areas and areas leased for temporary occupation where houses are not given unique numbers but merely use the names of the roads.

"In fact, in these areas the use of a surrogate address is quite common. The nearby residents or residents living in an area often use the address of premises such as a coffeeshop for the purpose of correspondence."

The EC says it has stepped up its efforts to get the complete addresses of electors by conducting checks on the ground in the affected areas, as well as creating a special facility on its website that enables the electors to update their addresses.

The opposition parties have been complaining that incomplete addresses in the electoral roll have thwarted their effort to verify the identities of suspicious voters, especially those born overseas.

'A man can have an even number as last digit in IC'

The 12-page booklet also clarifies why the electoral roll contains information on gender that is inconsistent with that in the voters' identity cards.

It says that the National Registration Department (NRD) has informed the EC that it is not necessary either for males to be issued 12-digit identity card numbers that end with odd numbers or females with even numbers.

“In reality, this is not the case. A male can have an even number as his last digit and a female can have an odd number as her last digit.”

The EC reiterated that it registers voters based solely on the information in the NRD database.

“As long as the identity card presented to the EC is valid, that is, it is issued by the NRD, the registration system at the EC will accept it and use the information contained in the identity card as valid information to ascertain the address of the elector.”

The booklet also addressed other issues related to the electoral roll which had been reported previously by Malaysiakini.

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