

Reporters find postal voting process unsatisfactory

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By Koh Jun Lin

While media personnel have been allowed to register as postal voters for the first time in this 13th general election, a number of reporters have found the process to be less-than-satisfactory.

Among the most common complaint is that the postal ballots arrived very late. Some reporters only received their ballots yesterday, while others received theirs as early as April 29.

NONE "It should have reached us earlier, at least a week before polling day," said a reporter with an English language daily, who declined to be named.

The reporter is currently based in Kuala Selangor and is a voter in another part of Selangor.

"There are three days before polling day, but I am in Selangor so it is still okay. But how about those who are voting in Penang or Johor? I am not too sure if their ballot papers will reach the returning officer (RO) by Sunday," she said yesterday.

The ballot papers are sent by priority mail in a special envelope, at the Election Commission's (EC) expense. These must be delivered to the respective postal voter's returning officer by 5pm on polling day, in order to be counted.

In Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysiakini journalist Aidila Razak said she and four other reporters from Kuala Lumpur received their postal ballots yesterday.

Aidila said she has been assured by staff at the city's post office that "all is well" and that her ballot papers would be sent back on time.

NONE She said when making inquiries about her ballot papers over the phone on Wednesday, she also found out that the situation was not unique to media personnel.

"When I called the EC hotline, the woman who answered said she too, as well as her colleagues at the EC headquarters, have not got their ballot papers," Aidila (right) said.

Said a poster voter reached in Ampang: "I called the Ampang RO and got the

assistant RO, who told me that a lot of people working in the Ampang polling district too were waiting for theirs... I think the ballots might be lost in the mail somewhere."

As for this reporter, the postman could not deliver the ballot papers on April 29 because of an error in the address: the number '0' had been typed in, instead of the alphabet 'A' for the house number.

However, I was able to retrieve my ballot papers on a visit to the local post office.

Meanwhile, KiniTV technical producer John Tan Jian Wuu tried to contact the Alor Setar RO via the EC hotline many times from 11am to 6pm yesterday, only to learn later that the phone number provided in EC's website was be incorrect.

"On my last call, around 6pm, a woman picked up the phone and told me that it was her house number, and that she had been receiving numerous calls from other people as well asking about their postal votes," Tan said.

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