

## **Constituency redelineation to be done at year end, says EC**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**May 10, 2013**

The Election Commission (EC) will start redelineating parliamentary and state constituencies at the end of this year, once court hearing on election petitions, if any, are done.

EC deputy chief Wan Ahmad Wan Omar told Sin Chew Daily that the commission had to wait for the six-month process of hearing election petitions to be over before starting the redelineation process.

The current laws allow voters to file election petitions challenging polls results within 21 days of the election result being gazetted, with a six-month deadline for the court hearing.

Wan Ahmad (right) said the commission was now busy with post-election work, including analysing election procedures and collecting feedback, and burning ballot papers of those constituencies where there are no election petitions, within 21 days of the results being gazetted.

If there are election petitions, the EC would have to testify in court, he said.

The last constituency redelineation exercise was carried out in 2002 and adopted by Parliament in 2003.

According to the federal constitution, there must be an interval of not less than eight years between two redelineation exercises, with a mandatory deadline of two years for the process to be completed.

Still more work ahead

After the exercise, the EC still needs a two-thirds majority support in Parliament and the state assemblies for the new constituency boundaries to be approved.

According to Wan Ahmad, the EC was busy preparing for the 13th general election since 2011, hence the delay in the exercise.

The 13th schedule of the federal constitution states four principles that must be observed in conducting redelineation:

While having regard to the desirability of giving all electors reasonably convenient opportunities of going to the polls, constituencies ought to be delimited so that they do not cross state boundaries and regard ought to be had to the inconvenience of state constituencies crossing the boundaries of federal constituencies;

Regard ought to be to the administrative facilities available within the constituencies for the establishment of the necessary registration and polling machines;

The number of electors within each constituency in a state ought to be approximately equal except that, having regard to the greater difficulty of reaching electors in the districts and the other disadvantages facing rural constituencies, a measure of weightage for area ought to be given to such constituencies; and,

Regard ought to be had to the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies, and to the maintenance of local ties.

The EC has earlier pointed out that constituencies are divided into three groups - urban, semi-urban, and rural (or interior) areas.

Nitty-gritty of electoral boundaries

According to the EC guidelines, the voter population for an urban constituency should be more than 60,000 for a parliamentary seat and more than 25,000 for state seat with an area of 8sq km to 49sq km.

For a semi-urban constituency, the voter population should be within 30,000 to 60,000 in a parliamentary seat and 15,000 to 25,000 for a state seat with an area of 50sq km to 250sq km, while the voter population for a rural constituency should be less than 30,000 for parliamentary seat and less than 15,000 for state seat, with an area of more than 250sq km .

NONE However, the guidelines do not apply to Putrajaya as the administrative capital was established in 2001 under an amendment to the federal constitution, which is not within the purview of the EC, Wan Ahmad said.

He also refuted speculation circulating on social media that the official electoral results do not match the actual record.

Wan Ahmad told the Chinese daily that the total number of eligible voters in this

general election was 13.26 million and 11.25 million of them voted at parliamentary level.

At parliamentary level, BN polled 5.23 million votes while Pakatan Rakyat garnered 5.62 million votes. Some 190,000 votes went to Independents.

At the state level, the total ballots cast were 9.74 million, with BN receiving 4.51 million votes and Pakatan securing 4.87 million. Independents took another 150,000 votes.

Wan Ahmad expects spoilt votes to be around two percent of the total but the EC has yet to ascertain the exact figure.

Asked why the issue of unreturned ballots still existed, Wan Ahmad said generally those were postal ballots.

NONE In another development, former Perak menteri besar Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin (right) said Pakatan will file election petitions on the results of six state seats in Perak.

However, the state Pakatan chief did not name them

Nizar called on voters to submit evidence on electoral fraud to the coalition to help it prepare the election petitions.

According to Oriental Daily News, the newly minted Changkat Jering state assemblyperson told a press conference in Ipoh yesterday that the number of spoilt votes in three state seats where Pakatan was defeated were higher than BN's majority.

The three seats are Lubok Merbau, Manjoi and Pasir Panjang.

Nizar also pointed out that Pakatan polled 625,710 votes or 54.79 percent at state level while BN only received 506,947 or 44.3 percent of ballots and formed the state government with a three-seat majority.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/229751>

