

## **We did consult ministry on indelible ink, insists EC**

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**By Koh Jun Lin**

Election Commission (EC) chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof insists that he has consulted with the Health Ministry regarding the safety of indelible ink used at the May 5 general election.

This is contrary to Health Minister Dr S Subramaniam's statement on Thursday that apparently the ministry had issued no such report.

NONE "Yes, we did (send the ink to the ministry for safety evaluation) and we have the reply," he said in an SMS communication with Malaysiakini yesterday.

Asked if the letter would be made public, he said, "We will inform the minister accordingly."

Abdul Aziz had previously told the Straits Times of Singapore in a May 12 interview that the Health Ministry had advised against adding more than one percent of silver nitrate to the ink.

"We paid about RM6 million and it wasn't low quality ink. The problem was that we couldn't put more than one percent of silver nitrate in the ink and the silver nitrate is what makes the ink last.

"We received a letter from the Health Ministry telling us that if we put more than one percent of silver nitrate in the ink, it could damage the kidney and cause cancer," he reportedly said during the interview.

Reports of ink cannot last

NONE Voters had lodged numerous reports with the police in the wake of the polls election that the ink could be easily removed soon after application, instead of lasting seven days as touted by the EC.

Following reports by a number of advanced voters (right) that the ink could be washed off, EC issued instruction to its staff to shake the bottle before use.

A voter, a chemist by training, had also pointed out that material safety data sheets (MSDS) for silver nitrate gave no indication of cancer or kidney damage risk.

Malaysiakini had contacted Subramaniam's predecessor Liow Tiong Lai for comment on the issue on Thursday, but has yet to receive a response.

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