

Gov't told to explain election cost ballooning 100pct
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The government has been told to explain the doubling of the cost of running the 13th general election from RM200 million in 2008 to RM400 million.

"This expenditure of as much as RM400 million must be questioned thoroughly, because this involves a 100 percent increase from the allocation in the 12th general election in 2008," said the DAP's Seremban MP Anthony Loke in a statement from Parliament.

azlan "Why is it that, in a period of five years, the spending for the general election can balloon 100 percent even though the number of voters have only increased 20 percent?"

He said the expenses covering 222 parliamentary constituencies work out to an average of RM1.8 million per constituency, which he described as extremely large compared to the spending limit for candidates that is capped at RM200,000 each.

He was commenting on a parliamentary reply on June 27 by Shahidan Kassim, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, relating to the GE13 expenditure breakdown.

Loke in his oral question had asked the Election Commission (EC) to provide a details of expenditure on conducting the 13th general election.

Shahidan said the Finance Ministry had approved an allocation of RM400 million.

This included RM5.081 million in allowances for additional working hours of staff; RM98.465 million to rent transportation, information communication technology equipment, telephone and fax expenses; RM204.1 million for service and consolation payments to staff; and RM92.354 million for other expenses.

MACC, auditor-general 'should step in'

Loke also compared the RM1.8 spent on every parliamentary seat to the Permatang Pauh by-election in 2008, which had cost the government RM409,000.

He pointed out that in the 12 by-elections held between 2008 and 2012, the expenditure had ranged from RM318,000 - as seen in Bukit Selambau, Kedah - and

RM1.290 million, as seen in Batu Sapi in Sabah.

Loke said the EC has to realise that every sen involves taxpayers' money, and that it cannot keep the expenditure a secret or spend extravagantly without accountability.

NONE "The people are still awaiting (answers on the) indelible ink scandal, costing RM7.1 million. Now we see the rising cost by 100 percent in conducting polls. The EC cannot just keep quiet," he said.

"The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the auditor-general should form a special committee to investigate and audit all the expenses by the EC in the last general election, as it not only failed to ensure clean and fair elections, but has wasted public money."

The MACC has set up a task force to investigate whether or not there were abuses in the purchase and specification of indelible ink, used for the first time in GE13.

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