**'Indelible' ink purchased via direct negotiation**
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The removable 'indelible' ink used during the 13th general election was purchased by the Election Commission (EC) through direct negotiation without going through open tender.

In a parliamentary written answer to Hanipa Maidin (PAS-Sepang) last week, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim said this was to ensure the confidentiality and security of the ink supply.

"Currently the EC does not intend to make public the information of the indelible ink supplier due to security reasons," he replied.

NONEShahidan (right) repeated the parliamentary answer given to Lim Lip Eng (DAP-Segambut) last month that a test conducted on media personnel on May 2 "proved" that the ink worked and could not be removed with detergent and bleach.

"If there is a serious effort to remove the indelible ink using detergent and bleach, certainly the indelible ink would be more or less removed subject to the intention of the individual," he explained.

Shahidan also reiterated that the total cost for the use of indelible ink during the May 5 polls was RM7.1 million.

The ink cost RM6.9 million including the costs for designing special ink bottles, the brushes, the boxes as well as the cost for the unique ink mixture, seeing as how it was not available in the market.

Another RM200,000 was for the cost of transportation, packaging and storage.

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