

EC: Separate elections possible but problematic
Malaysiakini.com
July 28, 2010

Holding federal and state elections at different times is technically possible, but the Election Commission (EC) foresees a number of obstacles this would pose.

machap by election nomination 030407 wan ahmadDeputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar listed the difficulties as additional expenses and time, while being an inconvenience to voters.

"More so, this may cause friction between the state governments and the sultan or governor," he cautioned when contacted today.

This is because the power to dissolve the state assembly lies with the head of each state.

Much depends on the relationship of the menteri besar (MB) or chief minister with the head of state. If the latter does not consent to dissolution, the EC will not be able to call an election.

"In the case of Perak (in February last year), the MB tried to dissolve the assembly but the sultan would not consent to this," Wan Ahmad pointed out.

Asked if it is possible for the head of state to dissolve the state assembly on his own, he sidestepped the question.

"I can't comment on that, that is something that never occurred. In these matters (dissolution of the assembly), the state must consult the palace..." he said.

"The powers of the rulers are enshrined in our constitution. These cannot be discounted or disregarded."

Pakatan proposal

Wan Ahmad was asked to comment on Pakatan Rakyat's assertion that it may not dissolve the legislative assembly in the states that it controls, should the BN-led federal government call a snap general election.

Pakatan's gambit is apparently to ensure better utilisation of its resources by not having to take on the BN at state and federal levels simultaneously.

pkrcongress seremban 250507 fuziah sallehPKR election director Fuziah Salleh was quoted in the News Straits Times yesterday as saying that the proposal is still under consideration.

"We are looking at all options and, at this moment, we are looking at it rather favourably," she reportedly said.

Fuziah said the issue had not come up before, since the BN controlled the federal government and most state governments.

The English-language daily also reported that Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim had said the state government can opt or not for simultaneous dissolution.

Currently, Sarawak is the only state that holds its election separately.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/138581>