

By-elections: Same day for Galas and Batu Sapi
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PUTRAJAYA - The Election Commission has set Nov 4 for the Batu Sapi parliamentary by-election in Sabah, the same day as the Galas state by-election in Kelantan.

The nomination day is on Oct 26.

EC chairman Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said Friday the EC decided to hold the by-elections simultaneously based on its previous experience of holding three simultaneous by-elections - for the Bukit Gantang in Perak, Bukit Selambau in Kedah and Batang Ai in Sarawak - last year.

"We want to shorten the time taken to conduct the by-elections, save on cost as well as minimising by-election tensions.

"There is also limited period available for a separate by-election because of the many upcoming events taking place such as the Deepavali, Aidiladha, Sabah state assembly sitting, Awal Muharram, Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination and so on. This is the best date for the Batu Sapi by-election.

"Sabah is also ready to face the by-election," he told a news conference after chairing a special meeting to decide on the by-election date here Friday.

Abdul Aziz said the EC had also agreed to set up two enforcement teams to monitor activities throughout the campaigning period.

He said the EC allocated RM1.3 million for the by-election which would involve about 400 election workers.

The EC expects the voter turnout to be about 80 per cent compared with 63.1 per cent in the last general election.

On the results of the two by-elections, Abdul Aziz said the EC was expected to announce them simultaneously at 8pm on Nov 4.

A by-election need not be called in the event of a vacancy after April 28 next year because the current term of parliament would only have two years left by then.

In KOTA BARU, PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said Friday the party will choose its Galas by-election candidate through voting.

He said the method was regularly used to determine the most eligible candidate although he had the final say on the selection process.

The Kelantan Menteri Besar also said three names had been proposed for the by-election.

The candidate's selection would be carried out by asking representatives of the Dewan Harian and the liaison committee to write the names of their preferred candidates, he said.

"This way, they won't feel uncomfortable about not choosing certain people openly," he told reporters after delivering a Friday lecture at the Dataran Ilmu here today.-Bernama

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