

4.5 million not registered as voters yet

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PUTRAJAYA: There are 4.5 million young Malaysians eligible to vote who have not registered with the Election Commission.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman lamented the apathetic attitude that young people have towards politics, as most of those who had not registered were between 21 to 35 years of age.

Malaysians must be 21 years and above to register as a voter.

Abdul Rashid said young people tended to be happy with material things and were less bothered about electing their leaders.

“Older people are more responsible about voting in elections,” he said yesterday after announcing the by-election date for the Batu Talam state seat.

He urged those who had not registered as voters to do so now, ahead of the next general election which must be called by May,

2009. People can register with the Election Commission at its offices, post offices or through political parties.

He said the EC was always prepared for an election to be called at any time. “Even if the general election is called this year, we are prepared to hold it,” he added.

The EC has spent the last few months clearing the electoral roll used in the 2004 general election of the names of dead voters.

“We do this by sending out teams on the ground to check with village heads on the deceased, as sometimes not all deaths are reported soon enough to the National Registration Department,” he said.

So far, 180,000 names have been struck off in the clean-up exercise and he believes there will be more names of the dead to clear. The present roll has just over 10.2 million voters.