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Batu Talam

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PUTRAJAYA: Nominations for the Batu Talam by-election will be held on Jan 16, and in the event of a contest, polling will be held on Jan 28.

Election Commission chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman, who announced this yesterday, said based on the electoral roll, 10,252 voters were eligible to vote in the election, of which 10,511 were ordinary voters and 14, postal voters.

He said the 14 postal voters were police personnel serving in the Batu Talam state constituency.

The seat fell vacant after incumbent state assemblyman Datuk Tengku Paris Tengku Razlan died on Dec 27 last year from rectal cancer.

In the 2004 general election, Tengku Paris won by a 2,761-vote majority, securing 5,414 votes to PAS candidate Dr Mohamed Nilam Abdul Manap's 2,653 votes.

Abdul Rashid said the commission was officially informed of the vacant state seat by the Pahang State Assembly Speaker on Wednesday.

He said the writ for the by-election was issued yesterday and the notice for holding the by-election would be issued today.

He said the commission had decided that the electoral roll for the state seat gazetted on Nov 30 last year, and which was re-gazetted yesterday, would be used for the by-election.

Abdul Rashid said in the last general election, the voter turnout was 76.6% and he hoped that being a by-election, more would turn up.

He said as Batu Talam was a small constituency, there would only be 12 polling centres, comprising 23 polling stations. He expected results to be known by 10pm that day.

Commenting on the number of voters in Batu Talam, Abdul Rashid said the number was lower than the previous 10,866 as the commission had weeded out the names of the deceased.

He said the commission realised it could not depend on the National Registration Department to weed out the names of dead voters and had gone ahead to do it on its own.

He said the process saw 180,000 names of deceased voters being dropped from the electoral list which was gazetted two days ago.

"But we think there are more (names of dead voters)."

Abdul Rashid said with 10.5 million voters in the country, another 4.5 million - aged between 21 and 35 - were eligible to vote but have yet to be registered.