

Register and vote or don't complain, says MCCBCHST
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 5 — If you do not register and vote in the election, you have “no right” to complain about unfavourable government decisions, the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) said today.

The non-Muslim inter-faith body added a person's failure to participate in the election was tantamount to saying he or she does not care about how the country is run.

“If you don't care, what gives you the right to complain when something happens that you don't like?” MCCBCHST president Daozhang Tan Hoe Chiew said today in a press conference.

He said in Election 2008, of the 15 million eligible voters in Malaysia, only eight million turned up to cast their voters. A total of 11 million were registered voters.

“Seven million (voters) were missing in action,” he said.

Tan said the council plans to embark on a nationwide voter registration drive on Sunday, December 11, at places of worship in 11 states and one Federal Territory.

“Just from the statistics, we know there are 4.384 million eligible voters who are not registered.

“We hope we can choose a government that is clean and transparent and people-centric, a government that can continue this prosperity, stability and harmony,” he said.

Tan denied the council's registration drive was politically-driven, saying that as a non-governmental organisation it was duty-bound to ensure voters are registered.

“This is non-political. It is more about awareness,” he said.

MCCBCHST Rev Dr Thomas Phillip agreed, saying religious leaders had a duty to help raise awareness on the importance of ensuring the country is led the right way.

“Our involvement is as religious leaders. It is our civil duty and responsibility to help people to be aware,” he said.

“To add, I think all religions teach us two things — duty and responsibility. And this is what we want to encourage,” said MCCBCHST secretary-general Prematilaka KD. Serisena.

The council, a signatory to Bersih 2.0, the election watchdog that staged the July 9 march for free and fair elections, also urged the government to implement the first round of recommendations made by the parliamentary select committee (PSC) for electoral reforms before the coming 13th general election.

The council's nationwide drive will be held from 9am to 2pm at Pertubuhan Buddhist Perlis,

Perlis; Malaysia Hindu Sangam, Sungai Petani, Kedah; Malaysia Buddhist Association, Ipoh, Tokong Hock Soon Keong, Teluk Intan, and SMK Perempuan Perak, in Perak; Kelantan Buddhist Association, Kelantan; Punjabi Language Centre, Seremban, Negri Sembilan; St Peter Church, Malacca; Sacred Heart Church, Taman Sri Tebrau and Sri Mariammaman Temple, Batu Pahat in Johor; Malaysia Hindu Sangam, Jalan Beringin, off Jalan Temerloh, Pahang; and Gurdwara Sahib Petaling Jaya.

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