

Indelible ink here to stay, says EC
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By G Manimaran

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 21 — The Election Commission (EC) insisted today the next general election will feature the highly-debated indelible ink, since it has Parliament approval.

Deputy chief Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar also told The Malaysian Insider that Malay rights NGO Perkasa should not generate Muslim apprehension by claiming the ink stain will be permanent, for the National Fatwa Council (NFC) endorsed the procedure even before Election 2008.

“The decision is final. We are only executing what Parliament has decided. No doubts should arise as the NFC has approved it (in 2007) and it will be submitted to the council again this time.

“Indelible ink is used in most Islamic countries,” he said.

Perkasa warned of a Malay boycott at the 13th General Election if EC proceeds with using indelible ink to prevent multiple voting.

Its secretary-general Syed Hassan Ali called the move “outdated” and claimed it would give an advantage to the federal opposition.

Wan Ahmad (picture) added today that according to new rules, ballot papers will not be given to voters who refuse to have their nails marked.

The EC had planned to use indelible ink, purchased for RM2.4 million, for Election 2008 but backed out at the last minute, citing public order and security issues.

The Attorney-General cleared the way for the use of indelible ink in elections — one of the eight demands by Bersih 2.0 — last month when he told the parliamentary select committee on electoral reforms only a minor change in electoral regulations was required.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak formed the bipartisan polls panel after weeks of international condemnation following his administration’s clampdown on the July 9 Bersih 2.0 rally for free and fair elections.

The government also promised to adopt the movement’s eight demands, which include the use of indelible ink, cleaning up the electoral roll and extending campaign periods, as part of the committee’s scope.

The coalition of 62 NGOs has since gone on a nationwide campaign demanding that Putrajaya fulfil its eight demands before calling for a general election that is expected soon.

Opposition leaders, who strongly back Bersih, have warned of further rallies should the government fail to implement these demands.

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