

Pakatan says will back constitutional changes to allow indelible ink

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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 15 — The federal Opposition said today it will support amendments to the Constitution to allow the use of indelible ink in future elections.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told reporters today that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will back such a proposal if it is tabled in Parliament during the current session.

“The Attorney-General (AG) has said it cannot be done without amendments. This is just a trick to delay.

“But PR agrees to support the amendments if they are done immediately and tabled within this sitting,” the opposition leader said.

The Malaysian Insider reported last week that the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform summoned Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail to explain why the government cannot use indelible ink — a key demand by polls reform movement Bersih — in a general election expected soon.

A source said the nine-man committee unanimously agreed that marking voters to avoid multiple voting could be implemented.

However, the source said the country’s top lawyer has insisted the Federal Constitution does not allow the authorities to force a voter to be marked with permanent ink.

Amendments to the Constitution require a two-thirds majority or 148 members out of the 222-member Parliament.

The ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) currently has 137 MPs while PR has 76.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang also stressed that PR’s stand is that the use of indelible ink does not require a constitutional amendment “but if the AG insists, we are willing to give our support.”

The EC had initially planned to use indelible ink, bought at a cost of RM2.4 million, for the 2008 general election but backed out at the last minute, citing public order and security issues.

PKR de facto leader Anwar has claimed that the last-minute change cost his coalition 15 federal seats.

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