

Indelible ink use to be gazetted next week, says EC
The Malaysian Insider
February 09 , 2012
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 9 — The use of indelible ink in all elections will become official when it is gazetted on February 15, the Election Commission said today.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Yusof told the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reforms during a closed door meeting that the matter was in its "final stages", along with allowing disabled voters to choose their own representatives to mark the voting ballot on their behalf on election day.

"We have been informed it is at its final stages. It will be gazetted on February 15, once it is done the use of indelible ink will be implemented," said PSC chairman Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili.

On December 19 last year, Abdul Aziz had announced the commission's decision to use indelible ink in the next general election to prevent multiple voting, fulfilling a key demand by the Bersih 2.0 coalition for electoral reform.

But the announcement drew the ire of leaders from Malay rights group Perkasa, who warned the Barisan Nasional (BN) administration of a possible Malay voter backlash.

In a statement a day later, Perkasa secretary-general Syed Hassan Ali claimed the Malays would even boycott the coming polls if the EC proceeds with its plan.

Ongkili also said the EC has allowed representatives from political parties to observe the voting process of advanced voters such as army and police officers.

The minister also explained that there would be no longer be a three-day "cooling off period" for candidates, and that they could not withdraw from contesting once they have entered their names as election candidates.

This, according to him will be gazetted on the first week of April.

Ongkili said nurses and doctors would be allowed to vote during election day, and that the EC was looking into the "possibility" of allowing journalists to use postal voting to cast their ballots.

He said it was "not practical" to eliminate all forms of postal voting, and that some forms should be allowed as long as there was full transparency in the voting process.

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