

Election panel taking steps to improve transparency

New Straits Times

July 20, 2012

By ALANG BENDAHARA

FAIR PROCESS: 10 of 22 Select Committee recommendations will be implemented in the next general election

PUTRAJAYA: THE Election Commission (EC) will implement at least a dozen new measures to improve transparency in the electoral process for the upcoming 13th general election.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said with these new improvements, there would be no reason for the commission to be accused of not being fair.

"We have implemented seven of 10 interim recommendations on improving the election process.

"Also, of the 22 recommendations by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reforms, we are in the process of implementing at least 10. The others will take some time to be discussed," Aziz said after a briefing with representatives of political parties here yesterday.

Aziz said the commission had even introduced some improvements which were not part of the recommendations.

"The appointment of both local and foreign election observers in the next general election is one example. So far, 16 local non-governmental-organisations are being considered."

Aziz said the use of indelible ink had also been made mandatory and those refusing it would not be allowed to cast their vote.

He said the commission had also decided to use two different indelible ink colours -- one for advanced voters and another for normal voters.

Advance voters are members of the security forces who will be allowed to cast their ballot ahead of time and will no longer be registered as postal voters. The advance voting process would be held a few days earlier.

An exercise using indelible ink was conducted at the briefing yesterday in a hall where a mock classroom set up for voting day was set up.

In his opening speech, Aziz hit out at political parties which preferred to highlight their dissatisfaction with the EC in the media instead of directing their grouses straight to the commission.

"Unlike some parties which cooperate with us to improve the election process, these other parties slam us in the media.

"They do not give us any information, but instead, we have to rely on news reports to find out their complaints. These parties need to realise they also have a role to play in helping the EC improve the electoral process."

Aziz said that the EC was willing to listen to ideas on improving the election process.

"No election supervising body is perfect in cleaning up its electoral roll, not even in Europe, but here, the EC is cleaning up its electoral roll daily."

He said this was the first time the commission had conducted a briefing on the election process to both opposition and government parties simultaneously.

Copyright © 2012 The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad.

Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/election-panel-taking-steps-to-improve-transparency-1.110162>