

**For Election 2013, Malaysians plan trip across Causeway to vote**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 30 — Barred from voting by post, a growing number of the estimated 400,000 Malaysians living in Singapore are planning to return home to cast their ballot in Election 2013, the *Straits Times* (ST) newspaper reported today.

The Singapore daily reported more than 100 people have registered with a carpooling website, [Balik Undi](#), run by the Singapore chapter of local polls reform group, Bersih, which aims to help Malaysians save on travel costs for that trip home during the 13th general elections that must be called by April.

The website helps to match drivers and passengers who share similar destinations through an online form.

Bersih Singapore coordinator Ong Guan Sin told ST that the group will be pushing the campaign hard after the Election Commission (EC) announced last week that Malaysians living and working in across the Causeway and in neighbouring southern Thailand, Brunei and Kalimantan in Borneo Indonesia would be excluded from a new regulation allowing Malaysians abroad to vote by post.

The EC did not give any reason for the exclusion.

Ong called the move “discrimination”, the paper reported.

An estimated one million Malaysians live and work abroad and before the regulation was gazetted on Jan 21, only civil servants and full-time students as well as their spouses were allowed to vote by post as absentee voters.

The election regulator also imposed extra conditions on overseas voters: that they must have been in Malaysia or returned to the country for 30 days in a period of five years before the dissolution of the current parliament or state legislative assembly.

The Singapore paper reported that some analysts have suggested that one reason the EC has imposed such strict conditions is because citizens abroad are likely to vote for the opposition, although the pundits also said another plausible reason was that those who lived nearby could easily return to Malaysia to cast their ballots.

A Malaysian in Singapore polled by the paper appeared to back the first suggestion.

“I’ve never voted because I’m always overseas, but I feel the stakes are higher this time.

“And the easiest way to make your voice heard is to put a tick in a box,” Malaysian photographer John Cheong told ST, which described the 48-year-old as a vote-virgin and self-confessed opposition supporter.

Cheong told the paper he is voting in response to problems he felt were plaguing the country, such as corruption and abuse of power.

But another, marketing executive Valerie Vincent, 26, told ST that not all Malaysians were going back to vote because they were upset with the government.

"For me, it's about experiencing the whole atmosphere of an election," Vincent, who is from Selangor, told ST, adding that she to take a bus with five or six Malaysian friends for the polls to her Selangor home state.

The EC has reported some 500 Malaysians abroad have registered to be postal voters since the option was provided for the first time.

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