

**Over 90 Percent Preparation For 13th General Election Completed - Election Commission
Bernama
March 24, 2013**

BENTONG, March 23 (Bernama) - The Election Commission's (EC) preparation for the 13th general election (GE13) such as logistics, polling premises and staff, is over 90 percent completed.

Chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said the preparation will only be fully completed after the nomination and polling dates were fixed following the dissolution of parliament.

"Everything is ready, laws were amended, forms, ICT facilities, officers and staff were picked, briefed and given practical training. Everything has been planned in detail.

"The budget is there, the only things missing are the helicopters and aircraft as they are charged on daily basis. If it is tomorrow, we will inform the operators," he told reporters after the final GE13 briefing for Federal Territories returning officers and assistant returning officers in Bukit Tinggi, near here, Saturday.

At the function, he also handed over appointment letters to the returning officers and assistant returning officers.

Abdul Aziz hopes that the preparation and improvements made would benefit the voters, party leaders and candidates to ensure a smooth GE13.

"I can assure you that the 13th general election will not be dirty. EC has made every effort to ensure it is clean. We conducted training for a long time with full equipment, provide enough polling centres, amend laws, rules and forms, as well as give voting chance to everyone."

However, he was disappointed with the number of Malaysians abroad who applied for postal voting which until yesterday stood at only 5,590.

Most of the applications were from Australia followed by United Kingdom, China, United States and Qatar. Some 713 applicants were rejected for being non-registered voters and were underage.

He said the indelible ink to be used on polling day will be distributed to the states the day parliament was dissolved.

"Some 10,000 bottles are for early voting while 200,00 bottles are for normal voting. The indelible ink for early voting last longer and the colour of the bottles are also different."

EC will also meet the Information Communications and Culture Ministry and political parties soon to discuss the decision by Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) to give political parties ten minutes to explain their manifestos.

The public can visit the website www.PRU13.gov.my, to find out about polling centres and important information about GE13.

Abdul Aziz said GE13 could be held simultaneously even if state governments decided to

wait for the validity of state assemblies to expire automatically.

"EC has 60 days to fix the nomination and polling dates after parliament is dissolved. If parliament is dissolved on March 26, we still have until May 26 to fix the dates. All state assemblies will be automatically dissolved by May 26."

EC was making efforts to hold GE13 simultaneously to avoid extra spending adding the expiry of Negeri Sembilan state assembly on Tuesday will not interfere with the state's administration.

"When this happens, the allowances of the state assemblymen will cease immediately, but the Speaker, Menteri Besar and the Exco will carry on as caretaker government," he added.

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