

GE13: Polling On May 5, Nomination On April 20
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PUTRAJAYA, April 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysians will go to the polls on Sunday May 5 in the 13th General Election, the Election Commission (EC) announced, Wednesday.

Nomination has been set for April 20, EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said.

He said early voting, also known as advance voting, had been set for April 30.

Abdul Aziz said this general election would have a campaign period of 15 days, two days more than in the 2008 general election.

In his announcement, carried live over RTM and TV3 at 12.30 pm from the EC headquarters here, Abdul Aziz said 13,268,002 Malaysians were eligible to vote in the 13th general election based on the electoral roll to be gazetted Thursday.

This general election will see candidates vying for 222 parliamentary seats and 505 state seats.

State elections will be held in all states except Sarawak where the last state election was held in 2011 and the mandate will only run out in 2016.

The EC convened a special meeting today to set the dates for nomination and polling after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had announced the dissolution of the Dewan Rakyat on April 3.

At the time of dissolution, the Dewan Rakyat had 137 MPs from the Barisan Nasional (BN), 29 from the Democratic Action Party (DAP), 23 from Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), 23 from Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and one each from Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) and Parti Kesejahteraan Insan Tanahair (KITA) and eight independent MPs.

Abdul Aziz said the EC received the declaration of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the dissolution of the Dewan Rakyat on April 3. The legislative assemblies of all the states, except Sarawak, were dissolved by April 5.

In accordance with Clause 4 of Article 55 of the Federal Constitution, the EC is required to hold a general election within 60 days of the dissolution of the Dewan Rakyat and the state assemblies.

Abdul Aziz said the EC had set tomorrow to issue the writ of election and April 12 for the notice of election.

He said that based on the electoral roll, there were 12,992,661 ordinary voters and 275,341 early voters.

The early voters comprised 161,251 military personnel and their spouses; 111,136 police personnel and their spouses and 2,954 absentee voters who lived abroad, he said.

Abdul Aziz said the EC had been allocated RM400 million to conduct the 13th General Election, which would involve 234,905 election workers.

He also said that the EC would make available 8,789 polling centres with 26,219 polling streams throughout the country.

A total of 8,245 polling centres, with 25,337 polling streams, would be made available for ordinary voting and 544 polling centres with 882 polling streams for early voting, he said.

Four new elements are to be incorporated in this general election to improve the voting process.

These are the use of the indelible ink to mark voters; early voting instead of postal voting for police and military personnel; allowing disabled people to bring along reliable persons to help them during polling and the abolition of the process of objection and withdrawal of nomination.

These new measures are being implemented following amendments in accordance with the Election (Conduct of General Election) Regulations 1981 (Amendment) 2012 and Election (Postal Voting) 2003 (Amendment) 2012. These were gazetted last year.

The regulation on the use of the indelible ink requires every individual who wants to vote to have his or her left index finger marked before the ballot paper is issued. Voters who decline to have their finger marked will not be issued a ballot paper.

For the first time in the history of elections in Malaysia, all media personnel, including journalists, photographers, cameramen and technicians, working outside their registered area of voting are eligible to apply for early voting.

Abdul Aziz said that to ensure a smooth general election, the EC advised all quarters to adhere to the rules and regulations as well as the instructions of the police to maintain public order.

Political parties and their supporters and other individuals were required to abide by the election campaign rules and conduct enforced by the EC, he added.

He reminded contesting parties and candidates against being involved in corrupt practices, warning that they would be penalised under the Election Offences Act 1954.

He also reminded employers to give their employees a reasonable period of time to exercise their right as voters.

"Employers who, directly or indirectly, refuse to allow their employees to vote can, upon conviction, be fined RM5,000 or sentenced to one year's jail as provided for under sub-section 25 (3) of the Election Offences Act 1954," he said.

The employers were also not allowed to deduct the salary or allowance of the employees or impose any penalty on them for being away from work at any time during the period they went to vote, he added.

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