

Malaysians Go To The Polls In 13th General Election
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysians have begun voting today in the country's 13th general election as 8,245 polling centres opened at 8 am nationwide.

The centres, with 25,337 polling streams, opened at various places, 80 per cent of which were schools, multipurpose halls and community halls.

Of the 13,268,002 voters, only 12,992,661 are eligible to vote today as 272,387 of them , comprising mainly military and police personnel, were early voters who cast their ballots on April 30.

The 272,387 early voters included 36,561 security forces personnel and their spouses who cast postal ballots.

Some 6,092 of the registered 8,756 overseas voters have also exercised their right, while the rest are absentee voters, with Australia recording the highest number of Malaysian voters overseas, at 2,000.

Early voting was carried out for the first time in a general election following an amendment to Regulation 27A of the Election (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981.

The process to determine the leadership of the country for the next five years involves the election of elected representatives to 222 parliamentary seats and 505 state seats except in Sarawak where only a parliamentary election is being held. Sarawak's state election was held in 2011 and the next one is due only in 2016.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will vote at Sekolah Menengah Sains Sultan Ahmad Shah in Pekan, Pahang, while Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin will vote at Sekolah Menengah Sri Muar in Muar, Johor.

A total of 240,000 Election Commission (EC) workers are involved in ensuring a smooth election, an increase from the 180,000 workers in the 12th general election in 2008.

The EC attributes the higher number of workers to several factors, one of them being the increased number of voters over the last five years.

In the 2008 general election, the BN, led by former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, won 140 parliamentary seats while the PKR-DAP-PAS pact formed the governments in Kelantan, Penang, Kedah, Selangor and Perak.

However, Perak switched to the BN after three elected representatives from the pact declared themselves independent representatives and expressed support for the BN.

The police have mobilised 112,000 personnel to ensure the safety of voters and advised them to exercise their democratic right without fear.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said he expected the first of the results of the 13th general election to be known as early as 7.30 pm today.

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