

Voting begins in GE13, long lines at polling centres

Malaysian Insider

May 5, 2013

BY THE MALAYSIAN INSIDER TEAM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 5 — Voting began at 8am across 8,245 polling stations in both east and west Malaysia in cloudy weather after 15 days of hectic and slightly acrimonious campaign for the country's 13th general election.

Long queues had formed at least 30 minutes before the voting booths opened in most of the polling centres as many made an early start to cast their ballots.

In Pekan, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor cast their ballots at Sekolah Sains Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah.

Najib, clad in white shirt, and Rosmah, who was dressed in pink baju kurung, and their son Norashman arrived at the polling centre at 9.10am.

After casting their votes, Najib and Rosmah mingled with the media before visiting other polling stations in the constituency.

In Putrajaya, incumbent MP Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor cast his vote at Sekolah Kebangsaan Putrajaya.

His opponent Datuk Husam Musa of PAS is casting his vote in Kelantan. Voting in Putrajaya was smooth, with long queues of young voters.

In Penang, confusion reigned in some polling centres as voters were told to line up to get their stream number slip outside before going in to vote.

Long lines formed outside some centres where voters were made to line up twice, once outside and again inside before they vote.

There were frayed nerves at SK Seri Tanjung as only one counter is open for voting.

There were massive jams along roads of most polling centres in the state.

In Bangsar's SMK Bukit Bandaraya in Kuala Lumpur, long lines are moving slowly as people turn up to vote.

PKR's Lembah Pantai incumbent Nurul Izzah Anwar voted in the hotly-contested federal seat.

More than 200 people were already queuing up at the SMK Bukit Bandaraya polling centre before voting opened at 8am.

Nurul Izzah said she is "cautiously optimistic" about her chances of winning as people clapped and cheered after she had cast her vote.

Lawyer Thean See Xien, 26, sprayed hand sanitiser on his left index finger and found that most of the indelible ink came off his fingernail, but a stain remained on the skin.

In Petaling Jaya, there are also reports of long lines at Sekolah Sultan Abdul Smad and Sekolah Damai in the PJ Selatan constituency.

A record 579 federal and 1,322 state candidates are contesting the 222 federal and 505 state seats in 12 states, excluding Sarawak which held state polls in 2011.

The Election Commission (EC) will for the first time use indelible ink to mark the fingers of voters who cast their ballots. There has been some controversy over the ink's permanency but the commission had a public demonstration after advance voters complained it could be rubbed off.

It has asked people to come out and vote early as marking fingers will take time and there is a 40 per cent chance of thunderstorms in at least 109 of the 222 federal seats the evening, between 3pm and 9pm, which has been the case the past few weeks.

The EC said a total of 13,268,002 are eligible to vote, comprising 12,992,661 ordinary voters, 161,251 military personnel and their spouses, 111,136 police personnel and their spouses and 2,954 absentee voters.

This is the first time that Malaysians other than civil servants and state scholars are allowed to vote abroad, if they had returned home in the past five years. That vote was held on April 28 but Malaysians living in Singapore, southern Thailand, Brunei or Kalimantan in Indonesia were excluded from the list and had to come home to cast their ballot today.

It is estimated that nearly 400,000 Malaysians working in Singapore will return to vote today. Just under 200,000 of them live in Johor alone while the rest vote in other states in Malaysia.

The EC held polling for advance voters from the military, police and their spouses on April 30 in 544 polling centres throughout Malaysia.

It also said that 234,905 election workers will be on duty today in the election that has a budget of RM400 million.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/voting-begins-for-ge13/>