

Kuala Besut By-election : EC Targets 95 Per Cent Turnout Of Early Voters
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KUALA BESUT, July 20 (Bernama) -- The Election Commission (EC) expects 95 per cent of those eligible to vote early for the Kuala Besut by-election to exercise their rights Saturday.

EC deputy chairman Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar said as at 11am, 53 per cent of the voters had cast their votes.

"If the turn-out of the early voters is more than 95 per cent, it is a success because there are officers who are not in the constituency as they have to attend courses or have other engagements," he told a media conference after checking on the early voting process at the Multi-purpose Hall of the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base in Gong Kedak, where two polling streams were set up.

Wan Ahmad said the EC had discussed with the management at the RMAF base in Gong Kedak to make arrangements for its personnel who were eligible to vote to do so in stages to avoid a long queue.

A total of 1,134 military personnel and their spouses, as well as 14 policemen are eligible to vote early in the Kuala Besut by-election today.

They began arriving at the multi-purpose hall as early as 7.30am, although the voting centre opens only at 8am.

Unlike the method used in the May 5 general election, where voters had the indelible ink painted on their fingernails, this time around the voters were required to dip their fingers into the ink bottle.

On the normal voting on July 24, which falls on a normal working day, Wan Ahmad said the EC was expecting a voter turnout of more than 75 per cent because the work places of most of the voters were not far.

In the May 5 general election, the voter turnout for Kuala Besut was 86.7 per cent.

In a related development, Wah Ahmad said the EC planned to announce the official result of the Kuala Besut by-election at 10pm to allow the Muslim party leaders and their supporters to break fast and perform the Tarawih prayer.

The Kuala Besut by-election has been necessitated by the death of assemblyman Dr A. Rahman Mokhtar of the BN of lung cancer on June 26.

He had won the seat with a 2,434 majority by beating Napisah Ismail of PAS in the general election on May 5.

Kuala Besut has 17,683 voters.

The Barisan Nasional has announced Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman, 37, a civil engineer with the Drainage and Irrigation Department who hails from Kuala Besut, as its candidate while PAS has named Endot alias Azlan Yusof, 48, a contractor, as its candidate.

Meanwhile, Terengganu Police Chief Datuk Jamshah Mustapa said the early voting process went smoothly without any untoward incident.

"We did not have any problem pertaining to security and everything is proceeding smoothly so far," he said at a media conference.

He said members of the security forces were deployed to the voting centre as early as 6.30am to ensure that the early voting process went smoothly without any undesired incidents.

"I praise the contesting parties for adhering to the regulations set so far," he said.

Jamshah reminded the parties contesting and their supporters to obtain approval from the Election Commission to distribute any pamphlet and to refrain from obstructing traffic.

Meanwhile, he said police had received 29 applications to hold ceramah as of yesterday.

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