

**Polling Opens In Kuala Besut State By-election**  
**Bernama**  
**24 July, 2013**

KUALA BESUT, July 24 (Bernama) -- Polling opened at 8 am today in the Kuala Besut state constituency in the first by-election in the country after the general election just over two months ago.

Eight polling stations have been set up to enable 16,534 voters to cast their ballots to elect one of two candidates vying for the seat. Some of the 17,683 voters of the constituency cast their ballots in advance voting last Saturday.

Engineer Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman, 37, is defending the seat for the Barisan Nasional (BN) and faces a challenge from businessman Endot alias Azlan Yusof, 48, of PAS.

The Kuala Besut seat fell vacant on June 26 following the death of assemblyman Dr A. Rahman Mokhtar. He had won the seat with a 2,434 majority in the general election by beating Napisah Ismail of PAS.

The eight polling stations have been set up at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kuala Besut; Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Kuala Besut; SK Alor Peroi; SK Kampung Nangka; SK Pulau Perhentian; SK Kampung Nail; SK Kampung Baharu and SK Bukit Puteri.

All the stations are scheduled to close at 5 pm except for the one on Perhentian Island which will close two hours earlier.

This by-election will see voters being required to dip their left index finger into indelible ink, instead of having the ink painted on, before casting their ballot.

The use of indelible ink to mark voters, to prevent their voting more than once, was introduced in the last general election, but there was controversy when several voters claimed that the ink stain could be easily removed.

Election Commission (EC) deputy chairman Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar, when monitoring advance voting at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) multipurpose hall in Gong Kedak last Saturday, said he expected about 75 per cent voter turnout in this by-election.

The voter turnout was 86.7 per cent for the constituency in the last general election, on May 5.

The official result of the by-election is expected to be announced after 10 pm today to enable Muslim leaders and supporters of the contesting parties to perform their 'tarawih' prayers of the Ramadan fasting month.

This by-election has drawn great interest because of the likelihood of a hung state assembly in the event PAS wins the seat.

The opposition PAS and its ally, PKR, have 15 seats in the 32-seat Terengganu legislative assembly.

The BN had formed the state government after the last general election when it won 17

seats.

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