

## **Election Commission to meet March 6 on Balingian state by-election**

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**OLEH THE MALAYSIA INSIDER**

The Election Commission (EC) is to convene a special meeting on March 6 to discuss the Balingian state seat to be vacated by Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud tomorrow.

The meeting, scheduled to begin at 10am at the EC headquarters in Putrajaya, would be chaired by EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof (pic), said EC secretary Datuk Abdul Ghani Salleh.

A news conference would be held after the meeting, he said in a statement issued in Kuala Lumpur.

Ghani said the EC was notified officially yesterday by the speaker of the Sarawak legislative assembly that the Balingian seat would be vacated by Taib tomorrow. Taib is to step down tomorrow as the chief minister of Sarawak after having served in that capacity since 1981.

In Kuching, Sarawak Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Amar Mohamad Asfia Awang Nassar said he received a letter from Taib yesterday stating that he was vacating the seat tomorrow.

He said he notified the EC in writing today on the impending vacancy.

"We leave it to the EC to take the next course of action after the seat is vacated (tomorrow), which will automatically allow a by-election to be held," he told a news conference.

Mohamad Asfia said that as the seat was being vacated more than two years before the expiry of the current tenure of the state legislative assembly on June 20, 2016, a by-election would have to be held by virtue of Section 21 (5) of the state constitution.

He also said that it would be up to the incoming chief minister, Tan Sri Adenan Satem, to decide on the Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate for the by-election

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