

《Vote for President in Russia》

MOSCOW - Voting began on Sunday in Russia's Far East in the presidential election which almost certain to hand victory to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

As Russia's vast territory encompasses nine time zones, voting first began in its Far Eastern regions, including Kamchatka and Magadan, at 08:00 am local time (20:00 GMT Saturday), while voters in other parts of the Russian territory still have to wait for several hours to vote.

Local media said that some 65 percent of the 109 million eligible voters are expected to cast their ballots in some 94,000 domestic polling stations and 384 overseas stations in more than 140 countries.

Voters in Kaliningrad, the westmost exclave of Russia located between Poland and Lithuania, will be the last on the Russian territory to cast their ballots at 21:00 Moscow time (1700 GMT) on Sunday.

The candidates running for the election are incumbent Prime Minister Putin, leader of the Communist Party Gennady Zyuganov, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy from the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), Sergei Mironov from A Just Russia party and an independent and billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov.

Opinion polls show that most voters are expected to support 59-year-old Putin who had served two terms as president from 2000 to 2008