

'Najib lacks confidence', no early polls
Malaysiakini.com
January 11, 2011

Despite the buzz about a possible snap election by March or July, the view in some quarters is that premier and BN head Najib Abdul Razak may not be quite ready to take the plunge.

Last Saturday's rare briefing by all 105 BN parliamentarians strengthens the school of thought that a general election may well be called only late this year or even next year.

Pakatan Rakyat leaders feel that Najib is not yet confident enough of a landslide victory, while a BN parliamentarian described the briefing as an opportunity to assess the ruling coalition's chances.

The MP, who is from the peninsula, confirmed that the premier showed interest in the unfulfilled promises in each constituency.

"I think now is not yet the right time. Why do we want to rush into a general election? An election is generally only called when a leader faces problems within the party or if his position is not safe, but this is obviously not the case," said the MP who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Voters have given us five years (and we are now midway through our term). We still have a lot of programmes to be implemented (under the Economic Transformation Programme launched last year).

"As the ruling coalition, we are not in a rush. We should be at least 70-80 percent confident (of success) - even 60 percent is not safe."

Najib himself has refused to say if snap polls are in the offing. He has only said that he still has time and that he will meet with BN state assemblypersons and grassroots leaders for additional briefings.

PBB Santubong MP Wan Junaidi Jaafar, who was in the first group that met Najib, said the premier had not given any indication of an election date.

"The BN meeting was about transformation plans like NKRA and NKEA. It is not likely (the election will be held) this year. If an election (is to be held soon), he would have indicated it to us."

Other BN parliamentarians contacted said they hoped that polls will only be held after the transformation plans produce results and improve the lives of the people.

Kota Belud MP Abdul Rahman ummo youth pc 100306 abdul rahman dahlanDahlan said it would be unusual to call a snap poll now when the term for elected representatives runs out in 2013.

"I don't think (it will be possible to hold polls in) March. There is no urgency, although there are some positive developments with the opposition in disarray."

In any case, he said the BN machinery is fully prepared for the "final call from the general", if a snap poll is held alongside the Sarawak elections, which must be held before July.

Still anyone's guess

DAP Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong said the BN briefing suggests that Najib is not confident about calling for an election and that he wants to thoroughly assess the situation in each constituency.

PAS Kuala Selangor MP Dzulkefly Ahmada kugan detention death funeral ummc to puchong 280109 kuala selangor mp dr dzulkefly ahmad said his source had disclosed that Najib was not "comfortable enough" about BN's chances after listening to the briefing.

"Najib always plays safe. We call this being 'risk averse' in investment terms. He must ensure everything is safe for him and he will do whatever to make sure of this.

"The election will not be held in March. If Najib has the courage, it will be in July together with Sarawak or in September."

Liew (right) predicted a 50 percent chance that polls will be held next year because there are limited suitable periods this year.

He cited the fact that many major festivals will fall in the second half of the year - Ramadan in August, Hari Raya Puasa in September, Deevapali in October and Hari Raya Haji in November.

"It is possible that an election will be held in the second half of this year but the possibility is low, because the only free period is between the end of September and middle of October," he added.

PKR Batu MP Tian Chua is among those betting on a date in the second half of the year, although he cautioned that this would depend on how Najib's plan progresses.

The last general election, held in March 2008, saw unprecedented gains for Pakatan which took five states and denied BN its long-held two-thirds majority in Parliament.

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