

'Slap on EC's face from Najib'
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The proposal for a parliamentary select committee on electoral reforms is a slap on the face of the Election Commission (EC), which is now deemed to be unable to do its job, according to Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

Lim said Najib Abdul Razak's decision to call for the select committee is a clear indication that the EC has acted "unfairly and unprofessionally" in running polls.

Lim, like his allies in Pakatan Rakyat, also warned Najib against calling for snap polls until the select committee completes its job.

"If the government announces the election before the select committee completes its work, it would mean that the election is based on a flawed process that is open to abuse of power," he told a press conference today.

Lim cautioned against the federal government using the committee to compel Pakatan MPs to accept BN's suggestions, by virtue of the latter's majority in the House.

"We do not want them to use their majority to go against principles of justice and freedom to ensure the electoral rolls are clean," said Lim, also the DAP national secretary-general.

Early polls now 'unlikely'

Although speculation about a snap poll has been rife, it is "most unlikely" that this will be called in November as many expect, he said.

This is because the PM is more keen on maintaining his position as Umno president than he is of seeing through the 13th general election.

If Najib calls for an early election, he has to ensure that the BN is able to get a two-thirds majority in Parliament - and by extension, Lim explained, his performance will determine if keep the Umno presidency.

Last day of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Najib Abdul Razak takes over as prime minister in Putrajaya. Najib's predecessor, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, had to quit early into his second term due to intense pressure and criticism over his bad performance in the 2008 polls, in which Pakatan Rakyat seized five states.

Internal squabbles with BN, in particular Umno, plus the downturn in the global economy are among factors that may influence Najib to delay the polling date to next year, Lim said.

He said the longer Najib waits, the less money he will have to fund the election. At the same time, it is unlikely that Najib will wait until his term ends in two years.

"He is between a rock and hard place, but he cannot drag the matter on too long," added Lim.