

Mahfuz: NFC scandal likely to delay election
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The National Feedlot Corporation controversy, which has implicated Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's family, is likely to put the government off from calling a general election soon.

This, PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar (right) said, was among several reasons why the general election would not take place in the next two months.

"It is unlikely that the government will call a general election while NFC haunts its and Umno's leadership," Mahfuz told a press conference at the PAS headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Another problem plaguing the government, he said, was the Public Service New Remuneration Scheme (SBPA), which was still under review.

The scheme in its current form, Mahfuz said, has created anger in the public service, a key voting bloc for the government, as it sees huge pay rises for top-tier government officers but only nominal increases for the lower tier workers.

Mahfuz said changes being implemented by the Election Commission (EC), such as the use of indelible ink, would also indicate that the general election would take place later.

"The EC will need a few months to train its people and produce new procedural manuals on managing the next general election (because of the changes being made)," he said.

Instead, Mahfuz speculated that the general election may be in April or May, shortly after the Agong's coronation to take advantage of the 'feel good' atmosphere.

"The Agong has been sworn in, but his coronation has yet to be held. The government will likely use the atmosphere of the Agong's coronation and call the general election after that," he said.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has been coy about when the 13th general election will be called.

However, the premier and his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin have been on a campaign blitz in several states in the past months to rally BN members.

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