

'Focus on pribumi, not Chinese voters'

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By Aidila Razak & Salhan K Ahmad

INTERVIEW Prime Minister and BN chairperson Najib Abdul Razak should focus his efforts on winning over "pribumi (indigenous, including Malay) voters", as there is little that he can do to sway the Chinese to vote for the federal ruling coalition.

NONE If he does not, said Abdullah Ahmad (right) - once a deputy minister and Umno supreme council member - Najib might "lose the pribumi too".

He advised Najib to "take good care of pribumi voters" if he wants to win big because they will decide who wins the next election.

"Apa yang dikejar tak dapat, dikendong tercicir," he said, citing a Malay proverb on the loss of what is being pursued as well as what is in hand.

Abdullah, popularly known as Dollah Kok Lanas, predicts that the DAP will win most of the Chinese-majority seats, while the mixed seats will be split between BN and Pakatan Rakyat.

"This leaves more than 100-something Malay-majority seats, and whichever (coalition) wins most of (these) seats will form the government," said Abdullah, who had served as political secretary to the Najib's father and second premier Abdul Razak Hussein.

In a speech Abdullah delivered in Singapore in January - and to which he referred during the interview - he had said that Umno/BN still "quite firmly hold Johor, Pahang, Sabah, Perlis, Negri Sembilan, Malacca and Sarawak".

"Penang, Kelantan, Selangor and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur are gone. Perak, Kedah and Terengganu remain a toss-up as to who will get there first.

"If my mathematics is right, Umno with the meaningful support/contribution of MIC, MCA and Gerakan and other component parties has more than an edge to romp home in good company."

Abdullah, who had coined the term Ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy), said during the interview that if the election were held now, the outcome would be close, but would not result in a hung Parliament.

Picking the election date

While he is not privy to some of the information Najib has, Abdullah believes that it would be wise for elections to be called "after Hari Raya Aidilfitri and before the haj season", or immediately after the budget is tabled in September.

azlan "If I were PM, I would advise the (Yang di-Pertuan Agong) to dissolve Parliament when the economy is good and there is pervasive good feeling among the people. That could happen after the budget in September.

"(The BN government) is giving out money now, but how long can it go on doing this?

"It is smart of the government to continue subsidising petrol and avoid what is happening in Indonesia now, the protests, demonstrations, and so on."

Last week, Ismail Sabri Yaakob, the minister of domestic trade, cooperatives and consumerism, had said

that the government is adding a 10 sen per litre subsidy for RON95 petrol, so as to maintain the domestic price in the wake of rising global oil prices.

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