

EC briefing sparks flurry on dissolution
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Speculation has heightened that the general election is around the corner when teachers from schools in the Johor Baru district that will be used as polling centres were summoned to attend a day-long briefing by the Election Commission today.

Notice of the briefing was hurriedly conveyed yesterday to selected staff of schools that have been designated as polling centres.

The teachers were called to attend the briefing at the indoor stadium in Jalan Tebrau, while staff at their respective schools would operate on a skeletal basis.

It is not known if such briefings have been scheduled in the other states on the peninsula, but sources say as goes Johor, so will the other states.

New press laws

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may want to dissolve Parliament before electoral reform pressure group Bersih can hold its sit-down protest planned for April 28 at the Dataran Merdeka.

The 12th Parliament's opening meeting of its fifth session, which began on March 12, is scheduled to end the day after tomorrow.

One stream of speculation had held that dissolution would only occur after another meeting of Parliament, possibly next month, to enable the government to pass new, supposedly more liberal, legislation on the media.

These new press laws would be seen as completing the liberalisation drive announced by Najib last September, which took in the legislation passed last December pertaining to peaceful assembly, reforms to election rules and includes the proposed new law governing threats to internal security and public order that the Dewan Rakyat passed yesterday.

The PM has trumpeted his raft of new legislation as emblematic of his push for reform and transformation of Malaysian politics.

