

Penang Umno leader: GE13 unlikely this year

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By Susan Loone

A Penang Umno leader is confident that the 13th general election will not be held this year, saying that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak will see out his full term out of his care and concern for the party.

Bayan Baru Umno chief Abdul Rahim Saibu put to rest questions on the date and month for the polls by assuring Youth delegates of his division that they still have time to prepare their strategy.

The event was launched by state Umno Youth chief Shaik Hussein Mydin, who was accompanied by Youth leaders from other BN component parties.

"(The general election) will most probably be held after Chinese New Year, but we don't know on what date," Abdul Rahim told some 300 participants at the division's general election machinery launch yesterday.

"Najib is very concerned about us. He will make sure we are properly organised before calling for election. He will rule (for the) full term. He cares about us and wants to see us doing well before he makes the call."

Najib, the head of Umno and BN, had last week issued the strongest hint to date that he favours the month of November for the polls, the number 11 being his favourite number.

Not to be outdone, Pakatan Rakyat has said it is close to 100 percent preparedness.

Abdul Rahim, also the BN coordinator for Bayan Baru, ruled out November or December as probable months for the election.

In Malaysia, important exams like SPM and STPM are held in the last two months of the year.

The east coast, with its high percentage of Malay voters, bears the brunt of heavy rainfall and floods during the monsoon seasons over these months.

'Unity required'

Abdul Rahim said that, even though Umno had lost badly in the 2008 polls, the party has been trying to make up lost ground in Penang.

In all its public appearances in Penang thus far, Umno has expressed its concern and willingness to fight for the interests other communities and has denied that its members are "racists".

"Later there will be a BN Youth gathering. We need unity to win in this election. so we will help MCA and Gerakan to win votes as well," he added.

Umno won 11 seats, emerging as the only opposition force in the Penang legislative assembly.

Candidates from Gerakan, which led the previous BN administration, and MCA lost all the seats they contested.

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