

**It's on, finally - Parliament dissolved today**  
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After months of playing a guessing game with voters, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has announced the dissolution of Parliament today, paving the way for the 13th general election.

He said this in a 15-minute 'live' telecast on all television stations at 11.30am, following an audience with the Agong early this morning.

"This morning I had met the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and sought his permission to dissolve the Parliament. And he had given his consent for the same," Najib announced.

However, Najib made a mistake during the live broadcast on the date of dissolution, reading the year 2013 as 2012.

"This morning, I have sought an audience with the Agong and delivered the instrument of dissolution to His Majesty for the consent to dissolve the 12th Parliament today, April 3, 2012."

Najib called on all state assemblies to be dissolved today as well, to enable state and parliamentary polls to be held simultaneously.

The Election Commission (EC), according to law, will have to fix the date for the election, which must be held within 60 days.

"I advise all state leaders to face their respective heads of state to seek permission for dissolution of state assemblies as well so that we can have simultaneous elections across the country," he said.

Najib, who was wearing a red tie, was flanked by his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin, and made the announcement in the presence of all of his cabinet ministers.

The announcement falls on the fourth anniversary of Najib's tenure as prime minister, and he asked the rakyat to remember the "transformation" that the government had been under way in the past four years under his leadership.

"In these four years you have witnessed the national transformation has taken place," he said, stressing that his is a "responsible" government.

Only official media were allowed to broadcast the announcement from within Najib's office in Putrajaya.

Previous prime ministers who were known to take questions from reporters after declaring the dissolution of Parliament.

Reporters from other media waited in the rain outside the office, as they were not permitted to enter or take shelter in the security station's waiting area.

However, the reporters - some of whom arrived as early as 8am - were told at around noon that there would be no press conference.

"We initially thought there was going to be a press conference. That is why we all came and camped outside, but then we were told at the last minute that we can only watch via 'live' streaming," said a disappointed reporter who did not want to be named.

"It would have been okay if we were allowed to watch inside (instead of waiting in the rain)."

Over to EC

Contacted later, Election Commission (EC) chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said the commission will call a meeting to decide the date for nominations and polling.

This can only be done after the EC receives a letter of notification from the speaker of Parliament, he said.

Asked when he expects to receive the letter, Abdul Aziz (left) said: "Maybe today or tomorrow or Friday or Saturday.

"But once we receive the notification letter, we will meet to fix a date for the polls."

Soon after Najib's announcement, Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim revealed on his Twitter account that he will seek an audience with the Selangor sultan in the shortest possible time.

"Thank God, finally the Parliament is dissolved. I will seek an audience with Sultan as soon as possible to discuss the status of Selangor state assembly," reads his Twitter posting.

According to law, the general election must be held within 60 days of dissolution of Parliament.

Nevertheless, it is speculated that EC is likely to pick a date in early May.

The minimum campaign period is 10 days, a new requirement imposed by the EC in line with a recommendation by the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform.

Najib will be seeking his first mandate since assuming the post of prime minister on April 3, 2009, after taking over from Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Today marks the fourth year of Najib's premiership.

In 2008, Abdullah had led BN to its worst ever electoral outing, losing five states as well as its long-time hold on a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

There are 222 parliamentary seats currently up for grabs, with the BN holding 135 seats, Pakatan Rakyat 75, and 12 in the hands of Independents and three other parties.

Pakatan controls four states - Selangor, Penang, Kelantan and Kedah - while BN has nine

under its belt.

This time around, Najib is seen as facing an increasingly cohesive federal opposition, which aims to unseat the BN and install Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister.

This election will see a huge number of new voters - an increase of 3 million, or 25 percent, since 2008, making it the biggest spike in Malaysia's electoral history.

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