

PM says general election after Hari Raya, but...
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Following thumping victories in the recent twin by-elections in Selangor and Perak, speculation has been rife that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak will call for a snap general election to cement his position.

Met by reporters in his parliamentary constituency Pekan yesterday, Najib responded to this, telling reporters that the 14th general election would be held after the Hari Raya celebrations.

However, the prime minister claimed ignorance as to which year's Hari Raya celebrations he was referring to.

"I can only say the general election will be held after Hari Raya. But as to which year's Hari Raya, I don't know," he is reported as saying in *Nanyang Siang Pau* today.

Najib pointed out that the by-elections in Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar showed that the people have confidence in BN's administration, despite a campaign to oppose him by a certain former prime minister who was not named in the report.

He said BN received a significant increase in the number of votes in polling districts that the former prime minister had visited.

"There were many doubts raised against me, but these were all answered in the two by-elections. The people know which party can protect their interests. The people can decide for themselves," he added.

Najib was obviously referring to Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who launched the Citizens' Declaration campaign in a bid to depose the prime minister and made public appearances in the two constituencies.

Meanwhile, BN strategic communications director Abdul Rahman Dahlan told reporters this morning that if the ruling coalition believes it can capitalise in holding a snap general election, then the prime minister would call for one.

Rahman also said since this was an important issue, Najib, who is also BN chairperson, would discuss it with the component parties.

"I know Datuk Seri Najib is riding high on his popularity, the economy is stabilising, the government is getting stronger and the people are coming back to us in terms of support and confidence.

"I am sure that if there is an advantage to do it (a snap election), we will do it," Rahman added.

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