

BN no longer has the upper hand in polls
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OPINION Barisan Nasional has been calling the shots all along. That advantage is no longer with BN. It used to surprise the Opposition by calling for snap elections when least expected, as and when it suited its scheme of things. Now it's in for a surprise!

There is some talk in the air that the Prime Minister may call for a snap election any time he chooses. Others have it that it may be held simultaneously with the Sarawak state elections.

Others believe it may be after the Sarawak elections because the Sarawak results will be a barometer of sorts to gauge the popularity of BN.

But irrespective of whichever reason may prevail and persuade BN to go for the polls it is unlikely that in West Malaysia all the states will have elections simultaneously.

In the past when Parliament was dissolved, all the states would also dissolve their state assemblies paving the way for a general election at the same time.

This was the advantage BN enjoyed: take the Opposition by surprise, force nationwide elections and stretch the meagre resources of the Opposition.

The Election Commission can also be relied upon to announce the shortest possible campaign period throwing the Opposition off guard and giving them almost no time to get their act together to contest the elections.

This time such tactics are not going to work anymore. The BN is in for a real surprise when the 13th general election is called for.

The Pakatan Rakyat has announced that it will not dissolve their state assemblies to coincide with the dissolution of Parliament. In other words, the states under the control of PR will choose their own timing to hold elections in their states and that too separately from the elections called for by BN.

For a change, PR will be at an advantage and BN will be without its usual advantage. This would mean that Pakatan will mount a full scale onslaught in BN states to wrest control of them. Marginal seats will receive the full weight of the PR campaigning. PR can go full steam ahead without any fear of having to defend their states while going on the attack in the BN states.

This reverse strategy will force BN to be on the defensive, something they are not accustomed to. They will be getting their own dose of medicine and it is bound to taste bitter!

This will be a new scenario for BN. It will not have its upper hand in determining its fortune or manipulating the election to suit its purpose.

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