

Nik Aziz urges caution on separate state polls  
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KOTA BARU - Pakatan Rakyat-ruled states have been urged to first carry out a study before deciding whether or not to call for state elections on a different date than the parliamentary elections.

According to PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, it was immaterial whether the proposal could be put to practice, saying the repercussion on the state governments for having separate elections from the general election must be examined.

Nik Aziz, who is Kelantan Menteri Besar, was responding to a statement by Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim who hinted that PR state governments could choose state elections on a date other than the day of general election which will be decided by BN as the Federal government.

Anwar had said that the power to dissolve the state assembly belonged exclusively to the respective state governments.

Nik Aziz, who is also the Kelantan Menteri Besar, however cautioned that having separate state elections would make things easier for the BN and UMNO machinery to train its gun on these states.

"I think the proposal should be reviewed before it is implemented," he said.

Since the idea for separate polls was mooted by Kelantan Exco member Husam Musa earlier this year, there have been both supporters and opponents to the plan among the PR leaders and supporters.

One PR supporter highlighted legal conundrums in the four respective state constitutions on dissolving their respective state assemblies.

"Kedah silent on Menteri Besar's discretion [Article 53 Clause (2)]. Kelantan similar Article 46 Clause (2). Selangor worse - even silent on whether Sultan can dissolve without MB's permission [Article 55, Clause (2) (b)]. Penang - Yang Di-Pertua can withhold consent [Clause 8 Article (2) (b)].

"And last but not least if it goes to court for some reason, let us not forget, if state and federal are in conflict, Federal prevails, Article 75 of Federal constitution, bad idea in my opinion," warned Vijay Kumar Murugavell in a posting on social network Facebook.

In June, Kelantan Exco Husam Musa had suggested that Pakatan Rakyat state governments respond to the prime minister's hinting of a 'surprise' general election by announcing their respective state elections earlier.

"What if the four Pakatan states move to set the date for state election earlier?" wrote Husam in a blog posting.

Husam said the states need to decide on a date for state election before Najib announces

that parliament is dissolved.

Explaining further, Husam said that there was a good chance that state elections would be held separately from the general election if Najib decide on a different date.

"This means the state election in four states will be different from the date of parliamentary elections if Najib chooses a different date than the date we have announced," he added.

Husam said by doing so, the Barisan Nasional government would be forced to decide and announce an election date which either coincided with PR's state election date, or set for an earlier date as PR has been hoping for.

Husam also said the move would eliminate the element of "surprise" in the holding of general election, which could catch PR off-guard.

Earlier, Prime Minister Najib Razak was quoted as saying that the date of the next general election would be a "surprise to all" in response to a suggestion by former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad that he should hold elections now due to his improved ratings.

Husam however said there was a possibility that the BN would continue the old way, in which case the parliamentary election will be on a different date than the state elections in the PR-held states.

"This suggestion is a democratic act to break the monopoly to determine the election date by the ruling party and to ensure fair play to all parties," he claimed.

According to him, the date for state election can be predetermined, such as using the year tenure as the determiner.

"If we decide the tenure is five years, then the four Pakatan state assemblies will be dissolved in early 2013. If we set for four years then we will dissolve the state assembly in early 2012.

"Let us tell Najib that he is not the only one who can spring surprises." - Harakahdaily

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