

Why General Election Will Probably Be Next Year
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KUALA LUMPUR -- Despite the many tell-tale signs that the general election will be held much earlier than its due date in March 2013, it may not necessarily be held this year.

Next year will be more like it, according to political observers.

Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak announced yesterday that he would tour the states from March, a move seen as signalling that the election might not be held this year despite earlier speculations that it might be called simultaneously with the Sarawak state election, due in July.

The current term of parliament ends in March 2013; even then, the election can still be held 60 days after the expiry date.

The media are watching the prime minister's every move -- meeting members of parliament, Umno division chiefs, holding a cabinet meeting outside Putrajaya and meeting the people -- and each time, questions were asked, "Is this a sign that the election is coming?"

Najib met Barisan Nasional (BN) MPs in December and Umno division chiefs on Feb 12 but it may not necessarily mean the election is impending.

Sources told Bernama that the Election Commission needs up to a year to prepare for the general election.

"I have the feeling that the general election will not be held in June, as speculated. The earliest would be next year," he said.

Another sign that the election may not take place this year is the fact that the Umno Supreme Council decided on Nov 30 last year to postpone this year's party elections by 18 months.

A political analyst who declined to be named said the postponement strengthened the argument that the election might be called around March next year.

"The Umno elections have been postponed for 18 months from October last year to April next year.

"Normally, Umno branch and divisional meetings take place around March and end in September and the Umno General Assembly taking place in October.

"March 2012, therefore, is the most suitable month to hold the general election," he said.

Asked on the likelihood that the election would be called between August and December this year, he said, he was not positive about it because Muslims would be fasting in July and celebrating the Aidilfitri in August.

The haj season would be in October, and November and December would be the time the people were busy with the preparations for their children's schooling, he added.

(Bernama)

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