

Has Mahathir Shattered Najib's Confidence?

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By Lim Kit Siang

For the past three weeks in his intensive electioneering campaign in Selangor and Perak in the build-up to an expected 13th General Election date in June, the Prime Minister Najib Razak has been exuding increasing confidence of a sure win in the next general election, including taking back Selangor state government from Pakatan Rakyat.

Najib's popularity has been on the rise, surging 10 points to 69 per cent following his role as Santa Claus with RM500 cash handouts to low-income earners and a slew of multi-million ringgit approvals and allocations in line with his "I help you, you help me" philosophy – but the Prime Minister's high personal approval rating is not matched by the ruling coalition component parties.

Only last week, Najib said "strong winds are blowing towards Barisan Nasional", public feedback "very encouraging" and people have been telling him that BN has regained public support since the 2008 polls.

The stage seems all set for 13th GE in June.

But something very strange has happened in the past few days as if all the momentum for a June elections have suddenly faltered.

Has Najib's confidence of a sure win in the 13th General Election in June this year been shattered by former Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's repeated gloomy warnings?

Mahathir delivered his latest warning to BN of "No easy wins ahead" yesterday, telling Barisan Nasional not to believe that it would enjoy any guaranteed electoral victories, saying Pakatan Rakyat is an opposition unlike those from his days as prime minister.

As Mahathir told Bernama Online:

"What is certain, it won't be easy for BN to get two-thirds majority this time. The opposition now is not like that of the past, and the current situation is rather confusing."

A day earlier, Mahathir had dropped another bombshell for UMNO to pulverise its sense of confidence when he admitted that UMNO does not have quality and talented leaders to form a capable government as "For decades, Umno has 'not allowed' the smart ones to join the party".

Mahathir is now advocating that UMNO should field outsiders in the coming general election, put up "good candidates, whether they are UMNO members or not" and abandon the practice of only picking divisional leaders to contest.

With the evaporation of the earlier UMNO confidence of a sure win in the 13th GE, even winning back Selangor and retaining Perak state governments, the stage seem to be set for Najib, on the eve of his third anniversary as Prime Minister, to do another "flip-flop" to push off the 13th GE to a later date.

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