

Form government if you want to set polls date, Dr M tells Pakatan
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PUTRAJAYA, Sept 14 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that only the government of the day can decide when to dissolve Parliament, claiming that the opposition would do the same, not negotiate with Barisan Nasional (BN), if they got into power in the future.

The former prime minister told reporters today that “nowhere in the world is there such a decision on the actual date.”

“It is the prerogative of the government. If they want to set the date, then form government first. When that happens, will they discuss it with us?” said the influential Umno leader.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers had earlier this week called for BN to negotiate and fix the date of the next general election together to avoid any dispute over the implementation of electoral reforms that Datuk Seri Najib Razak has promised.

The prime minister had announced last month that a polls reform panel would be set up, six weeks after tens of thousands poured into the capital in the July 9 Bersih rally to support free and fair elections.

However, he added later that reforms can be implemented as and when his administration saw fit.

The international media had widely criticised the Najib administration’s clampdown on the July 9 rally which saw water cannons and tear gas fired on demonstrators by police who also arrested nearly 2,000 leading up to and during the march.

Dr Mahathir (picture), who served as prime minister for over 21 years, has also told the Najib to delay polls until next year due to heightened racial tension in the country.

BN suffered historic losses in the 2008 elections, losing its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority and four states in a result that was widely blamed on splits within the dominant Malay demographic and dissatisfaction among Chinese and Indian voters.

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