

GE13: Barisan tipped for elections victory
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PETALING JAYA: The long wait for Parliament's dissolution has deprived the Opposition of the chance of postponing elections in the four states it governs, said the long-established *The Economist*.

"Simultaneous elections tend to favour Barisan Nasional, with its greater resources," it said in a write-up on "Malaysia's looming election".

It pointed out that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had the advantages of incumbency such as deciding when to call for the general election.

The Economist predicted that "the odds still favour the Barisan" in the coming elections as voters in the rural areas would help the coalition win.

"Constituency sizes give greater weight to voters in the countryside, who tend to be more conservative than the wired, cosmopolitan and cynical residents of the cities."

The Economist said Najib's prerogative of deciding when to call for elections was also favouring Barisan and disadvantaged the Opposition.

It also stated that the spate of sexual misconduct accusations against Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim might have eroded his standing.

The allegations might also create tensions within Pakatan, it said.

"Perversely, some Chinese remain worried by Anwar for a different reason: his early days as a firebrand Islamist student leader."

It pointed out that Najib remained very popular in opinion polls with an approval rating of 61% in a recent survey.

The Economist said Najib had done well when he went on TV on March 19 to talk about the Government's transformation programmes.

"He had a good story to tell, of robust economic growth of 5.6% in 2012, poverty virtually eliminated, inequality reduced and 400 legal cases against corruption initiated.

"And he was able to announce that a scheme to give cash handouts to poorer households will become an annual event," said *The Economist*, which started in 1843 "to campaign on one of the great political issues of the day".

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