

GE14: Analyst sees Najib waiting it out

Free Malaysia Today

May 6, 2017

By Robin Augustin

Awang Azman of UM says the PM may want to give BN more time to implement people-centric programmes.

PETALING JAYA: Recent developments indicate that Prime Minister Najib Razak will call for the 14th general election next year, according to a political analyst.

Speaking to FMT, Awang Azman Pawi of Universiti Malaya said he didn't agree with the general view that the election would be held between September and November this year. This view is based on the belief that Najib would take advantage of what has been called the "feel good" factor, attributed to a series of national celebrations, Malaysia's hosting of the Southeast Asian Games and a national budget for 2018 that is expected to be populist.

"I believe Najib wants to give his cousin, Hishammuddin Hussein, time to make his mark as the minister with special functions so that he will be seen as an alternative for the prime minister's post," Awang Azman said.

Hishammuddin now holds two portfolios, remaining as defence minister. After his new appointment was announced, there was intense speculation that he was next in line for the prime minister's post, overtaking Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Subsequently, Zahid said he was the one who proposed the additional portfolio for Hishammuddin.

Awang Azman said the longer Najib took to call GE14, the more time Hishammuddin would have to show his abilities and win over the public.

He also cited the current economic situation as a reason for Najib to wait.

"By delaying GE14, Najib is giving Barisan Nasional more time to implement people-centric programmes which it hopes will work in its favour," he said.

But another analyst, James Chin of the University of Tasmania's Asia Institute, said he believed Najib would call for GE14 "sooner rather than later".

He acknowledged, however, that it would be difficult to predict when the election would be held.

“Najib, in my view, is someone who is very cautious and he will only go ahead when he’s sure,” he said. “For Najib to ensure BN’s victory, he has to control the rural Malay seats and it’s clear that after PAS’ muktamar, PAS will be the spoiler in the GE14.”

He said the longer Najib took to call for GE14, the more time Pakatan Harapan would have to organise itself.

“The rural Malay seats are the most important to BN. So, to me, they will go with the feel good factor.”

Copyright (C) 2009-2016 MToday News Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved.

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/05/06/ge14-analyst-sees-najib-waiting-it-out/>