

## **GE14 will be mother of all elections**

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**It will pit the PM against a former PM and DPM, and array the families of Mahathir, Anwar, top DAP and ex-top PAS leaders against the might of the Umno-led Barisan Nasional.**

KUALA LUMPUR: The next general election is setting out to be the most interesting ever because, for the first time, a former prime minister and a former deputy prime minister are teaming up to take down a ruling prime minister.

The nation's longest serving prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has joined hands with his former deputy prime minister-turned nemesis-turned friend, Anwar Ibrahim, to take on Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Najib is Umno president, Mahathir was Umno president and Anwar was Umno deputy president.

A report in the South China Morning Post (SCMP) says the 14th General Election will be all the more interesting because the wives of all three are active in politics.

The report says Rosmah Mansor, Najib's wife, "is widely known in Malaysia as the one who wields the real power". The wife of Mahathir, Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, "is widely respected in and out of Umno" and she has joined forces with Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the wife of Anwar.

Just as exceptional, the eldest daughter of Anwar, Nurul Izzah, has formed an alliance with Mukriz Mahathir, the youngest son of Mahathir, to form a joint assault against Najib and his ilk, according to SCMP.

The report notes that in the DAP, stalwart Lim Kit Siang and his son Lim Guan Eng will lock hands with Mahathir, Anwar and the family of the late Fadzil Noor and the late Yusof Rawa, both of whom were the presidents of PAS.

Although they are a disparate group of parties and individuals, they have all come together under the common banner of Pakatan Harapan to fight the long-ruling Barisan Nasional headed by Najib.

The SCMP report says unseating Najib will not be an easy task as he can fall back on the National Security Council Act of 2016 which empowers the prime minister to declare an emergency in the event of any life-threatening situation on the ground.

The report says this is the first election where Malaysia's fiscal condition is in the red, "after the mismanagement of nearly US\$11 billion in and through 1Malaysia Development Bhd".

Also, the election will be a litmus test on the popularity of the goods and services tax.

The SCMP report notes that former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher was unseated in 1989 by the "poll tax".

It adds that the "Malaysian government, having dabbled in numerous corruption scandals ranging from the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC), to the Port Klang Free Trade Zone (PKFZ), 1MDB and Felda Global Ventures, is about to get its first verdict from the voters".

This is the first election where the top issues are almost all centred on the economy, ranging from corruption cases in the 1MDB scandal to the increased cost of living that has affected rural and semi-rural constituencies.

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