

**Likely outcomes of GE14**  
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**PRIME Minister Najib Razak has said that the upcoming 14th general election will be the “mother of all elections”. The outcome will have a major impact on the nation’s political future.**

**The following is an analysis of the trends, key issues and likely outcomes of GE14.**

**In GE13, the 4Cs (cost of living, crime, corruption and cronyism) and 4Rs (race, religion, rulers and regionalism) were key issues. Most of these issues will again be at play in GE14.**

**Several surveys have pinpointed cost of living and economic factors as among the most important issues facing many voters. Worries about jobs and unemployment and rising housing and transport costs ranked highly among many voters across the racial and demographic divide.**

**For the urban electorate, other issues are human rights-related, such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. Concerns about creeping arrogance of power upset some urban voters. Racial polarisation is a worry as well.**

**Issues of good governance, accountability and transparency as well as fairness and social justice will be important for urban voters too.**

**For rural voters, the position of the Malays and the Rulers and the status of Islam continue to be important. The 3Rs (race, religion and rulers) will be core issues for the Malay electorate although these may be less important for the urban Malays.**

**Improving their livelihood is also important. Resolving rural poverty needs to be addressed and will be a key electoral strategy for both sides of the political divide. Development and bread-and-butter issues are of vital concerns for rural voters.**

**Their fear of the potential loss of Malay political hegemony is another issue, and this may favour Umno as it has traditionally been perceived as the protector of Malay rights and benefits.**

**The evolution of Pakatan Harapan (PH) into a Dr Mahathir Mohamad-led opposition coalition is an interesting development in Malaysian politics. However, it is not unusual for a former PM to support the opposition. Both Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn were opposed to Dr Mahathir when he was PM and both supported Semangat 46 led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.**

**The PAS factor also needs to be taken into consideration. Without PAS in the opposition coalition, can DAP win in marginal constituencies with Malay voters and can Amanah win over PAS supporters?**

**Splitting opposition votes can be beneficial to Barisan Nasional (BN) in three-cornered fights, but it could be disadvantageous to MCA and Gerakan in Malay majority constituencies if PAS puts up a candidate to split Malay votes.**

**The key question is whether Dr Mahathir is able to win the support of urban Chinese and whether he still holds sway over rural voters, especially the older generation. There are some analysts who feel he may be able to swing Kedah to PH while some say some younger PH supporters may not support him.**

**In the last election, the strong belief in a possible change of government among urban voters caused them to swing solidly behind the then Pakatan Rakyat. But this time around, this feeling is missing as many urban voters are equally disillusioned with PH.**

**In the last election, DAP won between 85% and 90% of Chinese votes. Can it maintain this high level of support? Although the majority of Chinese voters remain with PH, the possibility of a small 10% to 15% swing back to MCA and Gerakan could lead to MCA and Gerakan winning another five to 10 seats.**

**On the other hand, some analysts feel that Chinese votes won't change and DAP will retain all the seats it won in 2013. But DAP has won almost all the Chinese majority seats in the country except for maybe two or three, so it will be hard for it to win many more.**

**As DAP has locked in all the urban seats, even if more urban Malays were to vote for the opposition, it is not going to result in more seats for it although the popular vote for PH may increase.**

**Whatever the urban sentiment, the deciding factor in GE14 will be the rural Malay seats.**

**For young voters, the key issues are jobs and employment, education and scholarship opportunities, affordable housing and cost of living. For young urban voters, human rights, fairness and social justice also rank high.**

**The #undirosak campaign in social media among young voters may cause the opposition to lose some of them if they choose to boycott GE14 or spoil their votes. Social media and fake news will have an influence on young voters as well.**

**Things appear to be rather quiet on the surface. There is a perceptible calm and lack of excitement compared to GE13 when the Ubah and Ini Kalilah slogans elicited a great sense of excitement and expectation of change among voters months before the election. This time around, it looks like most voters have largely made up their minds.**

**It is projected that BN has a solid vote bank of 36% to 38%, PH between 30% and 35% and PAS between 8% and 10%. Hence, GE14 will be largely decided by the 20% to 30% swing voters.**

**What are the possible timings for GE14?**

**There were considerable expectations that it would be held in March or April with a possible dissolution of Parliament after Chinese New Year.**

**But increasingly the view now is it will probably be held in late April or even early May before the start of Ramadan. The prime minister has two summit meetings in April – the Commonwealth Summit in London on April 16, and the Asean Summit in Singapore on April 27 and 28. There is also the Asean-Australia commemorative summit in Australia this month.**

**Although the prime minister can skip these summits if election is called, it is likely he will try to attend them.**

**BN will also want Parliament approve the new constituency boundaries, which are expected to favour the ruling coalition. This exercise may take up to late April to be completed.**

**In this regard, my expectation of the election timing is Saturday, May 5 or 12.**

**The likely outcome can be three possible scenarios:**

**BN regains a two-thirds majority, winning 148 seats (an increase of 15 from what it won in 2013);**

**Barisan narrowly wins a small majority of 120 to 125 seats; or**

**An upset win by PH of 115 to 118 seats.**

**My analysis is that BN will again retain power, winning between 125 and 140 seats. Although there are strong undercurrents at work, they will not be able to overcome the power of incumbency which Najib and Umno/BN enjoy.**

**However, it is expected that PH will win a greater share of popular votes.**

**Umno is expected to win back several seats from PAS, PKR and Amanah. The Mahathir factor may favour PH in Kedah with a possible win of the state government. However, with Mukhriz Mahathir out of Umno Kedah, Umno appears more united than before and this could reduce internal bickering and sabotage.**

**An Umno-PAS unity government in Kedah cannot be ruled out to prevent a PH state government.**

**In Kelantan, three-cornered fights and the absence of former menteri besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat may make it harder for PAS to retain the state government. Another PAS-Umno coalition in Kelantan cannot be ruled out. Neither can a straight narrow win by Umno.**

**In the last GE, the Chinese tsunami caused a lot of BN seats to be lost to PAS, especially in Selangor and Perak, with Chinese voters opting for PAS, which was unheard of in the past.**

**Whether DAP can deliver Chinese votes to Amanah is yet to be seen. The greater challenge facing Amanah is whether the traditional PAS voters will still solidly remain with PAS or are willing to vote for Amanah.**

**The prognosis for Amanah doesn't look good as PAS may win several seats in a contest against it. This may even result in these seats being won by Umno.**

**In the final analysis, Umno may win between 85 and 100 seats, MCA can win between five and 12, and Gerakan may win one to three seats. MIC is likely to win two to four seats.**

**In Sarawak, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) will retain all their seats. Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) should also retain its current seats. Should SUPP and UPP resolve their conflict and merge before the election, they are likely to win two to three additional seats.**

**In Sabah, Umno will still retain power but will face a strong challenge from Shafie Apdal's Parti Warisan Sabah, which appears to be flushed with cash.**

**Najib will remain in office as prime minister. In the Umno party elections to be held after GE14, it will be interesting to see the next line-up of vice-presidents because from that rank will emerge the future leadership of the country.**

**What matters more to Umno is not how many seats BN will win but how many Umno would. If it maintains or increases its seats even though other BN parties fare less well, the prime minister's position would be secure. All indications are pointing to Umno winning more than it did in 2013. – March 6, 2018.**

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