

DON: ADENAN LIKELY TO WIN BIG

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KUCHING: A big win for Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem is highly likely as most of the 11 new seats created by the Election Commission were within Barisan Nasional's strongholds.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Assoc Prof Jeniri Amir said DAP and PKR risk losing two to three seats or more due to an expected rise in Barisan's popular votes.

In 2011, Barisan netted 55.23% of votes to take 55 out of 71 seats.

Jeniri said projections had indicated that Barisan could score above 60% of the popular vote provided that tussles between SUPP-UPP and SPDP-Teras were resolved.

"My feeling is Adenan has failed to solve this. Even with his Team Adenan direct candidate solution, it's a bit late. I believe parties involved will sabotage each other just to prove he is wrong," he said.

Danger seats for Barisan include Sibu's Bawang Asan (held now by splinter group UPP) and Miri's Senadin, which the SUPP incumbent Datuk Lee Kim Shin won by a mere 58 votes in 2011.

Jeniri cited Dudong near Sibu as risky for DAP while Ba'kelalan near the Indonesian border would be "an uphill battle" for PKR to keep.

Recently, Jeniri was quoted as saying Adenan's approval rating was above 80%.

That study was conducted for the National Council of Professors in October last year and results could be different now, he said yesterday.

"Barisan's biggest challenge in urban areas will be national issues.

“Whatever gains Adenan has made will be negated by national issues in urban areas. In the rural areas, Adenan's biggest challenge will be issues related to cost of living, specifically the GST,” Jeniri said.

Jeniri said the state's move to abolish toll charges on three bridges and reducing electricity tariff had not brought the price of "eggs or anything people buy" down.

On Sunday, Adenan told reporters that he was confident and optimistic about the state election.

"This is probably my 11th election as a candidate," he said after addressing a closed-door election preparation for party workers of two rural PBB branches.

Adenan, will likely want to dissolve the Sarawak Legislative Assembly late this month if he aims to have the polls by end of April.

Jeniri said the gap between dissolution and polling day is usually a month.

“Since Adenan’s preferred election date is April 30 with nomination on April 18, then dissolution could be sometime between March 20 to 25. To be on the safe side, one can say dissolution is going to be end of this month,” Jeniri said when contacted yesterday.

In 2011, the state assembly was dissolved on March 21, nomination was held on April 6 and polling on April 16.

Adenan who is Sarawak's fifth Chief Minister, entered politics in 1976 as a legal adviser for PBB. In 1979, he won the Muara Tuang seat, representing the area until 2006, then moved to the Tanjung Datu seat, which he still represents.

Adenan, 72, became Chief Minister on March 1, 2014. The current term of the state government will expire on June 20.

He refused to comment about the assembly dissolution. "Anytime. Anytime," he said when asked whether it would take place in March.