

PERSPECTIVE

RESEARCHERS AT ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE ANALYSE CURRENT EVENTS

Singapore | 15 November 2022

Malaysia's GE-15 Manifestos: Wading Through a Flood of Offerings Lee Hwok Aun

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Malaysia will hold its 15th General Election (GE-15) on 19 November 2022. In this picture, Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob (C) of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and his wife, Muhaini Zainal Abidin (2nd-R), arrive at the nomination centre to hand over election documents in Bera, in Malaysia's Pahang state on 5 November 2022. Photo: STRINGER/AFP.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Malaysia will hold its 15th General Election (GE-15) on 19 November, at the onset of the monsoon season. An unprecedented three national coalitions are vying for hearts and minds, six million of whom are new voters.
- Manifestos of the three national coalitions — Barisan Nasional (BN), Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Perikatan Nasional (PN) — have departed somewhat from GE-14’s overpromise and self-aggrandizement but nevertheless still present a litany of “offerings”.
- BN is rallying around “Prosperity and Stability”, maintaining its DNA of material bounty, with novel elements and an inclusive posture. PH re-evokes the spirit of change – “We Can!” – with a people-centric and reformist but more cerebral action plan. PN, with its “Concerned, Clean, Stable” clarion call, projects competency and responsiveness – and a counterpoint to BN.
- On socioeconomic policies, all manifestos tap into voter concerns and insecurities about economic, education, health and climate crises. BN and PN present vast arrays, delivered in a simple checklist format; while PH’s offerings, though also broad, pay more attention to structural solutions.
- All sides court the youth, East Malaysia, women, rural communities, and low-income households. Notably, only PN explicitly articulates policies for ethnic groups. BN can rely on their base’s tacit assurance that ethnically-targeted policies will be safeguarded, while PH is banking on its all-Malaysia stance, with some indirect outreach to minority groups.
- Governance and institutional reforms are prominent in all the manifestos. While PH’s plans are the most substantive, BN’s is reticent specifically on anti-corruption measures.
- The manifestos provide voters with plenty to consider and some insight into each coalition’s policy stances and election strategies.

HASTY GENERAL ELECTION

Malaysia is rushing to hold its 15th General Election (GE-15) on 19 November before the monsoon rains get heavier. While Prime Minister Ismail Sabri's decision to dissolve parliament on 10 October was not entirely surprising, it was still unusual given that his administration's Budget 2023 had been tabled just three days prior.¹ The tide of handouts and bonuses that would have ensued next year is now suspended, while Malaysia is awash with campaign promises, amid flooding already hitting parts of the country.

Despite the haste to trigger the election and the prominence of political personalities — especially UMNO President Zahid Hamidi, the chief protagonist behind parliament's dissolution — manifestos remain important. Indeed, manifestos may be particularly impactful, due to the dual need to energize each party's or coalition's base, and to entice the six million new voters that have come onto the electoral roll. A fatigued and jaded electorate will need to be persuaded to turn out to vote. It will scrutinize the contenders – the incumbents' appeals for continuity versus the challengers' case for change. The popular contest, especially for first-time politically-unaffiliated voters, is augmented by the fact that the government coalition has fractured into Barisan Nasional and Perikatan Nasional who will be competing against each other, and against GE-14 winner Pakatan Harapan,

This Perspective surveys the three national coalitions' manifestos, in order to glean policy contents and gain insight into campaign strategies. I first discuss the role and importance of manifestos in general and heading into GE-15, based on the state of politics and preceding elections. I then survey the GE-15 manifestos of the three national coalitions, drawing out their basic structure, signature contents and salient features. Peering closer at socioeconomic policies, specific outreach and governance and reform pledges, we can observe similarities and differences, and fathom the coalitions' efforts to win over voters in the run-up to polling day.

ROLE AND IMPACT OF MANIFESTOS

Do manifestos matter? Should manifestos be taken seriously? How have recent elections shaped the approaches and strategies toward crafting these messaging vehicles? These questions are worth a brief discussion.

In principle, manifestos are paramount for parties and election candidates to declare their goals, priorities and plans, and for voters to make informed choices. Manifestos provide a means of accountability; the winners – especially elected representatives on the government side – can be scrutinized on promises being kept or not. Manifestos invariably strike a magnanimous pose and deploy inclusive language, but also play a practical dual role of energizing a party's base and reaching out to new, undecided or unaffiliated voters.

Manifestos have always made an appearance in Malaysia's elections, but a recurring practice of calling elections before full parliamentary terms and setting short campaign periods – the

interval between nomination day and polling day – has circumscribed their outreach since the 1970s.² At the general elections of 1995, 1999, 2004 and 2008, campaigns lasted a mere 8-10 days. The official minimum campaign period was subsequently extended, albeit by a slight margin, from 7 days to 11.³ The 2013 and 2018 elections saw, respectively, 15 and 11 days of campaigning. The timing of GE-14, which was triggered when parliament had run its full term, was foreseen, and hence some manifestos were presented prior to the dissolution of parliament. GE-15's campaign spans 14 days. The duration remains short, but perhaps a new norm of two weeks has settled which, given the ubiquity of online channels and mobile devices, is a sizable period for messaging to get across to the electorate.

Unquestionably, election manifestos are crucial for democracy and deserve due attention and serious consideration, but their limitations must also be acknowledged. They are typically crafted in a hurry by a special committee, and with limited information. Given the constraints on their formulation and the weight of their realization, as legislation and policies that elected government will be held to account for, there are grounds to be circumspect toward highly specific, voluminous and complex commitments. While it is reasonable to expect manifestos to encompass the full term – five years in Malaysia – their authors have a limited capacity to gauge the feasibility of plans or to foresee obstacles. From this perspective, broader signals and principal commitments are more useful than detailed roadmaps and specific targets.

A few factors are specific to Malaysia. The first pertains to the subverting of election promises. While understandable sources of anger and frustration, broken promises cannot be formally prohibited; indeed, it has to be the next election cycle that serves to judge the perpetrators. However, manifestos are clearly undermined by political defection which severs the link between the representative and the political platform of that person's election. This problem has bedevilled Malaysia for decades, but has recently been significantly resolved by anti-party hopping constitutional amendments.⁴ It should be noted that parties can still contest on a coalition's ticket and hence on the coalition's manifesto, but later leave that coalition *en bloc*.

Second, Malaysia's distinctive political order which revolves around pre-election coalitions augments the role of manifestos in facilitating cohesion amid ideological differences. Coalitions remain the dominant entities contesting Malaysia's general election, despite greater fluidity and widespread expectation of post-election alignments to form government, in the event of a hung parliament with no party or coalition winning a clear majority of parliament seats. Coalitions, comprised as they are of different parties that may subscribe to different tenets or appeal to different constituencies, need to clarify their common platform to voters. Manifestos also provide the component parties with points to rally around and to maintain disciplined and consistent messaging. Malaysian political parties have ideologically revolved around a common pool of socioeconomic policies. All parties espouse cash transfers, social protection, public education, public healthcare, and minimum wage. Manifestos have articulated these widely shared agendas, and arguably play an important role in showcasing each coalition's signature and distinctive ideas.

Third, manifestos reached a crescendo of sorts in GE-14, offering lessons to the political establishment. Pakatan Harapan set the bar with *Buku Harapan* (book of hope). Launched two months before GE-14, the 194-page, 28,000 word-long booklet presented 60 promises and detailed sub-promises and targets that read in parts like an academic treatise. At the same time,

Buku Harapan highlighted 10 signature promises to be delivered with the first 100 days. While extravagant and unwieldy, and admittedly a sign of desperation, its simple and resonant messaging – most significantly, abolishing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) – were clearly impactful and tapped into the zeitgeist. However, the PH administration became saddled with the impossible task of fulfilling the other promises.

BN's manifesto, in turn, was styled in a confident, glossy and imposing manner, with moments of unabashed self-absorption, notably when declaring that it had scored 99.4 per cent success in delivering on 2013 election promises. The 220-page document contained slightly over 6,000 words. BN pitched its case for re-election with fanfare and hyperbole, e.g. with a promise to generate *three* million jobs. PH had, one month earlier, promised one million quality jobs. In sum, PH's manifesto revealed the hazards of overpromising, while BN's experience showed that self-praise and grandiosity do not sell well anymore.

15TH GENERAL ELECTION: NATIONAL COALITIONS AND THEIR OFFERINGS

Fluidity has pervaded Malaysia's politics in the past five years and continues to feature in GE-15. But parties have chosen their sides, and settled into three major national coalitions. This Perspective focuses on the manifestos offered by Barisan Nasional, Pakatan Harapan and Perikatan Nasional, all of whom have presence on the national stage, spanning Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak (Appendix Table 1). Regional coalitions, in Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah, are also major players; while recognizing the electoral importance as potential kingmakers, and noting the peculiarities of Gabungan Rakyat Sabah that bands together national rivals as regional allies, this Perspective will not cover the regional coalitions' manifestos.

Panoramic view

The manifestos were unveiled soon before or just after nomination day (5 November), beginning with Pakatan Harapan (2 November), then Perikatan Nasional (6 November) and Barisan Nasional (7 November). Campaign slogans, and the orientation, breadth and structure of the manifestos inevitably generated some first impressions (Table 1). Curiously, all avoid the use of “manifesto” and cast their propositions as “offerings” (*tawaran*) instead of “promises” (*janji*). It would appear that Malaysians' disillusionment with election promises has yielded a change in semantics.

Table 1. GE-15 National Coalition Manifestos: Key Information

Coalition	Slogan and length ¹	Structure, orientation and key rallying points
Barisan Nasional	<i>Perancangan Amal dan Usaha</i> (PADU) ² “Stability and Prosperity” 48 pages 2,800 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 chapters, 99 offerings • Omission of incumbent government’s achievements (2020-22) • Extensive state largesse to voters and free provisions • PADU represents a “new and fresh deal”⁵
Pakatan Harapan	“ <i>Kita Boleh!</i> ” (We can!) 94 pages 12,100 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 priorities, 39 offerings • Omission of achievements in government (2018-20) • Broader commitments and more extensive reforms • We can: safeguard people’s welfare, govern with integrity, prepare the nation to face the future⁶
Perikatan Nasional	<i>Prihatin, Bersih, Stabil</i> (Concerned, Clean, Stable) 97 pages 6,400 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 mainstays, 30 approaches, 234 offerings (50 major) • Muhyiddin administration’s performance highlighted; Budget 2023 to be enhanced • Extensive funding for public programmes/institutions • <i>Malaysia Gemilang</i> (Glorious Malaysia); ⁷ cleaner ethnically-based alternative to Barisan Nasional

Source: Author’s compilation from manifesto documents.

Notes: ¹ Word counts based on Malay language versions; ² PADU roughly translates: *planning of deeds and efforts*.

Of course, candidates’ promises and coalitions’ achievements are being trumpeted in *ceramah* stump speeches, and through infographics disseminated via social media. However, the distinct forward-looking disposition of PH’s and BN’s manifestos appears to avoid possibly stirring citizens’ pessimism, given the former’s short-lived tenure and the latter’s fractious administration. PN, with a thinner voter base – aside from PAS’ East Coast and Northern Peninsula strongholds – depends more on an appeal to its performance in power, particularly the assistance extended in 2020 at the height of the Covid-19 induced recession.

The manifestos are still expansive but less voluminous than *Buku Harapan* of 2018, and exude less bravado than BN’s riposte to PH. The gravitation toward long lists, again, derives from the lack of ideological variance on economic policies which constitute the bulk of election agendas, and induces the padding of manifestos with supplementary details. The foreseeable intense multi-cornered fights, compounded by the high stakes of the first-past-the-post system, also inflates the range of offerings which, in turn, increases the chance that voters will latch onto one or two items that sway their decision.

BN’s manifesto, *Perancangan Amal dan Usaha* (planning of deeds and efforts), has been popularized in acronym form as PADU, which means solid or integrated. The stability and prosperity slogan echoes BN’s former achievement of longstanding rule and development delivery. While PADU is forward-looking, it also seeks to associate voters with BN as a solid and action-minded coalition. Some voters might question its claim to stability, given that the

ruling coalition has in the past year been destabilized by UMNO's infighting, particularly between party president Zahid Hamidi and Ismail Sabri, who is one of three vice-presidents. Despite Ismail being publicly declared as BN's Prime Minister candidate and his indication that Budget 2023 will be reprised if BN forms government, PADU makes no mention of the budget.⁸ Ismail's flagship *Keluarga Malaysia* (Malaysian family) brand makes one obscure appearance. However, on prosperity, PADU's second leg, BN makes a straightforward appeal that votes translate into immediate and tangible benefits.

PH's rallying cry, "*Kita Boleh!*", aims to re-energize a supporter base that may be lethargic or discouraged, and to incite sentiments favouring change among undecided and new voters. PH's orientation and tone, which is more text-heavy, minimalist and cerebral, aligns with its demeanour as being more about substance than style, and may provide voters with a sense that this administration looks beyond short-term gains and takes an interest in underlying problems, as exemplified by its articulation of structural solutions rather than giveaways, such as eliminating cartels and reviewing highway concessions.

PN evidently rides on the Prihatin brand popularized through Covid-19 assistance extended during Bersatu President Muhyiddin Yassin's tenure as Prime Minister (March 2020 – August 2021). At the same time, PN commits to retaining and enhancing Budget 2023, and seeks to project itself as a responsive and capable government. Of the three manifestos, PN's contains the most public-funding commitments, such as RM5 billion for a Special Investment Promotion Fund. Emphasizing its anti-corruption stance and overt ethnic identity, PN also positions itself as a cleaner version of BN.

POLICY SPECIFICS

The manifestos are too voluminous to cover in-depth. This section collates election pledges that stand out for their commonality or uniqueness, or for revealing information on each coalition's voter outreach. Table 2 shows a selection, sorted into three categories: Socioeconomic policies, Targeted initiatives, and Governance and reforms. The list is far from exhaustive, and various offerings may fit into more than one category. Notwithstanding these limitations, this collation and synthesis can yield some useful insights.

A few striking commonalities demonstrate the cross-party buy-in and popular pressures to declare support for a few initiatives. All three manifestos commit to raising public health expenditure to 5 per cent of GDP, the World Health Organisation's recommended minimum, and to expanding rent-to-own housing schemes. The moral imperative of amending the constitution to allow Malaysian women to confer citizenship on their overseas-born children — a right currently enjoyed only by Malaysian men — has duly been recognized all around. Among the governance and reform priorities, political funding and the separation of the offices of the attorney-general and public prosecutor, have a place in two out of the three manifestos. The recurrence of these manifesto items does not necessarily mean they are the most popular and necessary initiatives, but indicates a responsiveness to causes often raised by civil society.

Of course, the differences are more consequential. The manifestos' specifics fill in the picture sketched above of variations in coalition strategy and voter outreach. The discussion that follows does not address all items in Table 2. The list serves to show that all manifestos contain plans targeting low- and middle-income households, youth, rural communities and farmers, women, Sabah and Sarawak. All also cover the major sectors of education, employment, healthcare, and climate crisis.

BN's PADU is stacked with generous handouts and some notable group-targeted policies. At the forefront is a slate of free provisions – free childcare and early education, free laptops for B40 children, and free higher education for B40 students (whether this entails tuition waivers or bursaries, or both, is unclear). PADU also pledges to eradicate absolute poverty by topping up the monthly income of poor households to RM2,208, the official poverty line for determining that a four-member household is poor. While the objective of ensuring that no household receives less than poverty line income is noble, the introduction of another cash transfer – moreover, one that is more complex than the existing schemes paying fixed amounts – warrants deeper investigation. Is it unclear how this new Assistive Basic Income Scheme will work in tandem with other cash transfers and how it will address specific implementation challenges, especially the possibility that applicants may under-declare their income because the lower their income on record, the higher the monthly income top-up. BN's omission of explanation throughout the PADU manifesto is especially acute on offerings such as this basic income top-up. Nonetheless, BN can bank on the proposition being attractive to many voters. To reduce higher education cost, BN proposes conducting 50 per cent of university teaching online. However, the manifesto also grants full autonomy to universities, which somewhat contradicts the top-down pre-determination of teaching mode – a decision that autonomous universities should be empowered to make. Among the governance and institutional reforms proposed, we can also note the conspicuous absence of a political funding law and anti-corruption measures.

Table 2. GE-15 Manifestos: Salient offerings, notable similarities and distinctive elements

Socioeconomic policies and income-targeted programmes	Targeted initiatives for distinct groups, regions or causes	Governance and institutional reforms
Barisan Nasional		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raise public health spending to 5% of GDP; expand rent-to-own housing schemes</i> • Textbook-free schools and free laptops for B40; free childcare and early education; ‘free’ higher education for B40 • Income top up to RM2,208 for all households in absolute poverty; 2% tax cut for M40 • Remove Approved Permits (AP) for agro-food imports • Stricter environmental laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow women to confer Malaysian citizenship on their overseas-born children</i> • 50% online learning in higher education (to reduce cost) • Dependent Contractor Act to safeguard gig workers • Uphold “need-based” policy in welfare and social protection • Tax deduction for diversity (ethnic, gender) in management • 5,000 young, modern farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Separation of attorney-general and public prosecutor</i> • Parliamentary Special Select Committee to vet and recommend top public service appointments • Grant “full autonomy” to public universities and colleges • Youth Committee for Policy Review in Parliament • Upgrade Malaysian Institute of Integrity to Malaysian Commission of Integrity
Pakatan Harapan		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raise public health expenditure to 5% of GDP; expand rent-to-own housing schemes</i> • Cash transfers; free school breakfast • B40 higher education scholarships • TVET independent coordinator (to address the sprawled and disjointed sector) • Dismantle food supply cartels; review highway concessions • National Disaster Protection Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow women to confer Malaysian citizenship on their overseas-born children</i> • Address Covid-impacted: lost generation in education; contract doctors • Increase rice price subsidy • Redress discrimination (race/religion/gender); minority group outreach (native rights, UEC recognition) • Sabah-Sarawak to get 1 Deputy PM, 35% parliament seats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Separation of attorney-general and public prosecutor</i> • <i>Political funding law</i> • <i>Combat corruption</i> • Create ombudsman system • Term limits for Prime Minister, fixed parliament terms, repeal draconian laws, enact Freedom of Information • <i>Establish a National Health Service Commission</i> • Government Procurement Act • National security and Malaysia on the global stage
Perikatan Nasional		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raise public health expenditure to 5% of GDP; expand rent-to-own housing schemes</i> • MyPrihatin one-stop-centre for keeping database and disbursing aid • Consolidate National Employment Council; create 1 million high-paying jobs • Kad Prihatin for access to private/public health facilities • Establish a Natural Disaster and Climate Change Taskforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow women to confer Malaysian citizenship on their overseas-born children</i> • Empower Bumiputera agenda, foster well-being of Orang Asli and all ethnic groups • Gig workers’ training incentive • New public university in Sabah/Sarawak • Empower FELDA generation • Expand DanaNita for new women entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Political funding law</i> – especially to regulate foreign donations • <i>Combat corruption</i> • Create Anti-Corruption Court • Strengthen government procurement to reduce leakages • Pay raise for civil servants (as per Budget 2023) • <i>Establish a Health Service Commission</i> • Uphold Islamic legal system and Syariah courts

Source: Author’s selection; Note: *Italicized items appear in two or three manifestos.*

Perhaps the most interesting element of PADU is the suggestion that it will facilitate a transition from “race-based policy to need-based policy.” Surprisingly, BN’s manifesto makes no mention of Bumiputera policies or any ethnically-targeted programmes, something that have been integral to its policy agenda. This omission may stem from a perception that Malaysian society yearns to move on from the old rhetoric of race. Nonetheless, BN will clearly retain race-based policies; PADU’s need-based policies pertain to basic needs provisions where race has never been a factor. PADU remains reticent about reforming “race-based policies”, and presumably counts on its voter base, especially the Malay community, tacitly being assured that the granting of preferential access to public higher education, loans, contracts, and wealth ownership will continue.

PH’s manifesto contains no major surprises. There is substantial continuity, in recommitting to various social assistance programmes, including some initiated during PH’s administration, such as the free school breakfast. PH stands out for advancing a broad reform agenda, encompassing new regulations like fixed parliament terms and established matters like the repeal of draconian laws. Expectedly, PH places more emphasis on Covid-19 impacted groups such as the lost generation in education, since its administration preceded the pandemic and hence it can take a completely oppositional stance toward such matters. PH makes some of the boldest pitches to Sabah and Sarawak, most saliently, the offer of one Deputy Prime Ministership (alongside another from the Peninsula) and 35 per cent of parliament seats (up from the current 25 per cent). The latter may encounter resistance, as it entails a much steeper increase of parliament seats in Sabah and Sarawak — which comprise 16.6 per cent of Malaysia’s citizen population — than on the Peninsula, and will widen the already problematic size disparity between constituencies.

On matters pertaining to ethnicity and identity, PH maintains its stance of focusing on the elimination of discrimination, whether based on ethnicity, religion or gender, with a few commitments that reach out to minority groups. Assuring voters that PH will adequately represent all groups’ interests, especially with regard to its management of the deeply embedded and predominantly pro-Bumiputera preferential system, has been the coalition’s persistent dilemma. It remains a key factor in PH’s appeal.

PN’s manifesto resembles BN’s bullet-pointed, unelaborated delivery. Leveraging on the Prihatin brand, it proposes a MyPrihatin one-stop-centre to agglomerate data and social assistance programmes, and a Kad Prihatin health card. PN makes more extensive offerings for FELDA communities, and provides a substantial menu of governance and institutional reform pledges. Expectedly, given Islamist party PAS’ weighty presence in the coalition and its larger machinery for mobilizing voters, the manifesto commits to its staple causes such as the Islamic legal system and Syariah courts. PN makes a rather overreaching bid for Sabah-Sarawak votes by proposing a new public university – a decision that demands more rigorous analysis and sober judgment.

On ethnicity-based policies, PN not only resembles what is commonly associated with BN, but due to PADU’s silence actually occupies a space vacated by BN. PN’s manifesto declares, as a priority, the empowerment of the Bumiputera agenda, as well as efforts to safeguard the well-being of the Orang Asli and all ethnic groups. With minimal track record and much less gravitas with the Bumiputera, especially Malay, electorate, the prominence of Bumiputera policies in

PN's manifesto is unsurprising. However, whether this enables PN to make gains on BN in the Malay-majority constituencies where they stand a fighting chance remains to be seen.

IMPRINTS AND IMPACTS

Manifestos present ideas, plans and inducements. The manifestos of GE-15 clearly make imprints on Malaysia's political and policy spheres. Election contenders have become more tactful in presenting offerings instead of promises and in adopting a more modest tone. Consensus on various issues reflect the challenges they encounter in differentiating themselves, which likely contribute to the manifestos still comprising a sweeping and extensive catalogue. Nonetheless, some differences in the offerings are obvious, and some can be discerned. All provide assurances to their bases, and appeals to undecided and new voters. Perhaps most intriguingly, BN's PADU stays silent on ethnic policies while PN robustly champions the cause, and PH abides by its commitment to avoid any ethnic framing of policies.

Manifestos are but one of a multiplicity of factors that determine an election; their impact on the vote is nuanced and ambiguous. They merely contain the collective message. The messengers – election candidates and party machinery – will have to convey the message with emotive resonance, and add personal flourishes. A question also hangs over the post-election impacts of the manifestos, in the event of a hung parliament and ensuing bargaining to form a governing coalition.

Appendix
Appendix Table 1. Malaysia's GE-15: Formal coalitions / electoral pacts and their component parties

Coalition	Component parties
<i>National coalitions / electoral pacts</i>	
Barisan Nasional	United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS, Sabah-based) • Leaders: Incumbent PM Ismail Sabri, UMNO President Zahid Hamidi
Pakatan Harapan +	Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), Democratic Action Party (DAP), Parti Amanah Negara (AMANAH), United Progressive Kinabalu Organisation (UPKO, Sabah-based); Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (MUDA) • Leader: PKR President Anwar Ibrahim
Perikatan Nasional	Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (BERSATU), Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (GERAKAN) • Leader: BERSATU President Muhyiddin Yassin
<i>Regional coalitions / electoral pacts</i>	
Gerakan Tanah Air (Peninsula-based)	Parti Pejuang Tanah Air (PEJUANG), Parti Perikatan India Muslim Nasional (IMAN), Parti Barisan Jemaah Islamiah Se-Malaysia (BERJASA), Parti Bumiputera Perkasa Malaysia (PUTRA)
Gabungan Parti Sarawak	Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS), Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), Sarawak United Peoples' Party (SUPP)
Gabungan Rakyat Sabah + Barisan Nasional	Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (BERSATU), Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku (STAR), Parti Progresif Sabah (SAPP), United Sabah National Organisation (USNO)

ENDNOTES

¹ Speculation was rife that the general election would be held before the year's end, in accordance with UMNO President Zahid Hamidi's demand. This expectation was affirmed when the Budget 2023 speech was moved from late to early October, which allowed for an interval between presenting the budget and holding the election at the start and before the full force of the monsoon season. The government's talking points also began to highlight the fact that Malaysia has held a November general election before, in 1995, when parliament was dissolved soon after the budget speech but before it was debated.

² The May 1969 general election had set the maximum two-month campaign period. The May 13 racial carnage that occurred in its aftermath was attributed in part to the long campaign heightening sentiments and expectations. However, Malaysia subsequently swung to the other extreme of minimal

campaign duration, which was arguably insufficient for voters to be informed and was clearly advantageous to the incumbent.

³ “Minimum campaign period now 11 days”, *The Borneo Post*, 21 March 2013

(<https://www.theborneopost.com/2013/03/21/minimum-campaign-period-now-11-days/>).

⁴ “Malaysia's anti-party hopping law comes into effect on Oct 5”, Hazlin Hassan, *The Straits Times*, 4 October 2022 (<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysias-anti-party-hopping-law-comes-into-effect-on-oct-5>).

⁵ “GE-15: Government unveils PADU manifesto, a new deal to propel Malaysia towards developed nation status”, *Bernama*, 7 November 2022 (<https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2136236>).

⁶ R. Loheswar, “Pakatan rallies behind ‘Kita Boleh’ slogan, asks supporters to create storm on social media”, *The Malay Mail*, 4 November 2022 (<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/11/04/pakatan-rallies-behind-kita-boleh-slogan-asks-supporters-to-create-storm-on-social-media/37333>)

⁷ Nur Hasliza Mohd Salleh, “PN offers over 200 initiatives for economy, well-being in election manifesto”, *MalaysiaNow*, 6 November 2022 (<https://www.malaysianow.com/news/2022/11/06/pn-offers-over-200-initiatives-for-economy-well-being-in-election-manifesto>).

⁸ “Budget 2023 will be presented again before year-end, says Ismail Sabri”, *Bernama*, 17 October 2022, (<https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2129812>).

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