

HAJ NOT A DECIDING FACTOR — PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The haj season was not a deciding factor in determining the date for the general election, the Prime Minister said.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said that the absence of 25,000 pilgrims from the

country during the general election would not affect polling.

This was in view of the fact there were seven million voters in all.

He said the haj season was not a factor in determining the date of the general election because if it was "the people will always conclude that the

Government would not hold a general election during the season."

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir also refuted a suggestion that the pilgrims would be denied their right to vote.

"If we think that way then we would have to bring back all Malaysians abroad... a lot of people cannot cast their votes."

Elections Commission chairman Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Talib said the commission was not taking steps to enable the pilgrims to vote by post.

So far, 8,441 pilgrims have left for the Holy Land while 18,720 more are scheduled to perform the haj this season.