

Prepare for polls,

BN told

**By Farush Khan,
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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today sent the polling date guessing game into another spin when he directed Barisan Nasional Ministers, party workers and supporters to be on standby for the general election.

The Prime Minister then advised those who were going on leave to be on their feet and be ready to "come back" once an announcement was made on the election.

Dr Mahathir said this at a Press conference after chairing a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting here.

He said: "The supreme council discussed the general election today and the party's preparation for it, but there is no decision (on the date) yet."

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said he was also confident the BN would perform much better in the coming general election than in previous polls.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said since the coalition won a two-thirds majority in the 1990 general election, it should be able to score better this time, considering the Government's excellent performance in the last few years.

His confidence was also supported by the fact that all BN component parties were well-prepared for the election, he said.

"This should be the case, unless the people cannot see the many good things that we have done ... even the world has seen so."

As he had mentioned before, Dr Mahathir said, the general election would have to be held anytime between now and the end of next year.

His confidence was also based on a study by Umno on voter composition which showed that over 50 per cent of voters in some constituencies was made up of Umno members.

Besides this, the people has also realised the Opposition is "just making noise" instead of implementing projects beneficial to the people.

Even though the date of the general election has not yet been fixed, Dr Mahathir advised everybody to be on his feet.

On a lighter note, the Prime Minister said Ministers who failed to take their leave this year might not be able to do so next year unless they obtained permission.

Asked to comment on the high number of public objections received by the Election Commission on the new electoral rolls displayed last month, Dr Mahathir said he was surprised that there were 17,959 public objections in Kelantan alone.

"I do not know what is being done in Kelantan. Apparently, too many things are not right. This will need a lot of time to sort out the problem. We cannot use the new voter registration until January."

Asked to comment on Australia's insistence that the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) be made a free trade zone by the year 2020, the Prime Minister said Australia had as much right to promote it as Malaysia had in rejecting it.

Asked on why two former leaders of the banned Al Arqam movement, Khairul Annuar Ujang and Hassan Mokhtar, were still being detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) while the others had been released, he said the two were arrested later.

Six Arqam leaders, including its leader Ashaari Mohammad, were released last week after he had publicly confessed to be leading a movement which deviated from Islamic teachings.

Asked to comment on reports that Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah would reply to Dr Mahathir's statement that the president of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 had discredited the country abroad, the Prime Minister said it was his right to reply.

"What is clear is that in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation interview, Tengku Razaleigh said that corruption in Malaysia involved billions (of ringgit)."

"If a country has such corrupt leaders but enjoys an

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PM: Tengku Razaleigh is just being jealous

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eight per cent growth every year, can control inflation and can provide a lot of job opportunities, then the situation must be very good!"
Dr Mahathir believed that

such a negative statement was made out of jealousy. "During his (Tengku Razaleigh's) time as (Finance) Minister, the rate of unemployment and debts were high," Dr Mahathir said.