

Dr M: General election not imminent
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KUALA LUMPUR – Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that the general election will not be held soon despite the call for immediate change by Umno president Najib Abdul Razak.

"I don't think that it will be held soon. There is still time," the former prime minister said when asked after the Umno general assembly ended Saturday.

He said Najib's winding up speech brought new spirit to Umno and answered many questions while clearing the confusion.

He said the plan by Najib and his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin to visit 20,000 Umno branches next year would close the gap between leaders and the people.

On changes to the education system, the former Umno president said they were good but need to be strictly implemented.

In his winding up speech, Muhyiddin said that history would be made a must pass subject for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination starting 2013 and made a core subject for primary schools.

On membership registration, Umno Vice-president Mohd Shafie Apdal said the party has to register new members so that they become voters to ensure Barisan Nasional (BN) victory at the next general election.

He said efforts to increase membership has to be stepped up as it has not reach the desired level.

"From January to June, Umno only managed to register 13,125 members and BN 14,768 compared to DAP which registered 10,693 and the opposition 18,129 members.

"There is a lack of urgency in the states and this is a big worry," *Bernama* reported him as saying when winding up debate here.

He said scrutiny of the Umno membership list found that 700,000 members did not vote in the last general election causing BN candidates to lose by slim margins in seats like Ayer Hitam and Pantai Merdeka in Kedah.

The Umno membership registration bureau chairman said the party would have to win over the non-Malays and avoid cliques.

Shafie said the Malays should not be complacent with their rights in the constitution as it was not enough to ensure success of the race.

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