

Pak Lah: Anwar won't influence polls timing

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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has kept his options open on the timing of the next general election, saying the return of opposition figure Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to active politics next year would not tempt him to call an early poll.

A general election is not due until 2009, but there is widespread speculation that the Prime Minister will go to the polls by the end of this year.

This is partly because Anwar's ban on active politics does not expire until April 2008.

Abdullah, speaking in an interview with Reuters and CNBC, refused to rule out a snap poll but said he still had unfinished business from the last election, held in March 2004, and dismissed Anwar's impending comeback as a temptation to call an early election.

"If I want to have an election at a certain time, that is not one of the factors," he said at his office here. The interview is to be aired next week.

"There are many things that the Malaysian voters would want me to do to fulfil my promise to them and I think that I still have some more work to do - that's honestly what I believe," the prime minister said. - Reuters