

Kelantan Umno moves polls prep into overdrive
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KOTA BARU, Sept 4 — The divisional chairmen of Umno Kelantan were today named as polls directors for their individual constituencies, feeding further speculation of an impending general election.

State Umno chief Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the 14 will proceed to pick their deputies for both federal and state seats.

Mustapa, who is also minister of international trade and industry, said the latest development was to put the party's election machinery into overdrive in anticipation of snap polls.

Kelantan is currently under Pakatan Rakyat rule, and has been in opposition hands for over two decades since Barisan Nasional (BN) lost hold of the state in Election 1990.

Speculation of an early general election continued to build today with news that BN federal lawmakers will get special cash allocations from Putrajaya to upgrade infrastructure and engage constituents through programmes and welfare aid.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak previously announced a RM1.4 billion welfare allocation to some half a million underprivileged recipients including senior citizens, the disabled, and widows of army and police personnel last month.

The Najib administration also paid a half-month bonus to 1.3 million civil servants and RM500 to 600,000 government pensioners before Hari Raya amid public concern over rising inflation.

A general election is not required before 2013, but Najib is reportedly keen to secure both his personal mandate and regain a powerful parliamentary majority, which BN lost in Election 2008.

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