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## Be prepared for snap polls, officers told

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Election Commission (EC) has informed its officers to be prepared for a snap election, said chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman.

Stressing that he was not one to speculate, Abdul Rashid said the EC was prepared "for anything" and was capable of handling a snap election as it had all necessary infrastructure in place.

In an interview with *mStar Online* yesterday, he revealed that after the post-mortem of the 12th General Election, he had instructed all returning officers (RO) to be prepared for any eventuality.

Similarly, the 140,000 people involved in the general election have also been advised to not refuse when called upon again for duty in the event of a snap election.

"But I don't want to speculate, and it is not for us to speculate, but we are prepared for anything. In the past two months of meeting with the ROs, I've already told them to be prepared as it may be called anytime," he said.

Abdul Rashid was responding to talk on recent

events that have led to speculations of Umno members defecting from the party en masse and even party hopping following Barisan Nasional's dismal showing in the elections.

Various parties have since come forward in favour of an anti-hopping law proposed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Mohd Zaid Ibrahim in March.

In the same light, tension has been fuelled in Barisan following the shocking announcement of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's resignation from Umno on Monday.

Political observer Dr Chandra Muzaffar said the possibility of a snap election in the near future could not be dismissed.

"However, I do not consider it as a serious possibility, only that in politics, such possibilities cannot not be rejected outright," he said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia political communications lecturer Associate Prof Dr Abdul Muati @ Zamri Ahmad said it was possible a snap election could take place if MPs were to cross over.