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Abdullah tells party leaders to establish good ties with the people

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Umno acting president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today urged party leaders to reduce politicking.

Abdullah, who is the Prime Minister, said that being the ruling party, Umno leaders must foster good relations and help the Government establish good ties with the people.

"Umno leaders must display a better image now in terms of co-operation with one another. We must show the people that we can work together for their benefit.

"At the same time, leaders must also reduce politicking and concentrate on efforts to strengthen the party and enhance its image.

"This can help us attract more young professionals and intellectuals to the party," said Abdullah after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Abdullah, who took over as Prime Minister from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Friday, later joined the supreme council members in breaking fast and performing Maghrib prayers.

Asked about preparations for the next general election, Abdullah said he had instructed Menteri Besar, Chief Ministers and State Umno liaison committee heads to ensure that all projects planned for the people were implemented.

"We must ensure that all projects which we have planned are carried out.

"The projects which have been abandoned must be revived. Our service to the people must be continued.

"It is equally important that while we are preparing for the election, we must not stop working for the people. We need to implement all the projects so that the people can make use of the facilities available."

Abdullah said party leaders must also continue their preparation for the next general election as Umno wanted to achieve a big victory.

On the appointment of the Umno acting deputy president, Abdullah said: "We did not discuss the matter. When I have decided, then I will announce."

Regarding the pro-tem divisional committee members, Abdullah said the matter would be finalised at the next supreme council meeting. The Umno supreme council had previously decided to dissolve all its divisional committees and form pro-tem committees for its 165 divisions and the 25 new ones created following the redelineation exercise.

To a question on whether the new Deputy Prime Minister would be announced before Abdullah leaves for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Nigeria early next month, he said: "I have yet to decide whether I am going or not for the meeting."

Abdullah said that Umno would also organise a thanksgiving function for Tun Dr Mahathir and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali after the Hari Raya celebrations in recognition of their contributions.