

**Pak Lah wants time to finish his projects**  
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**Chan Kok Leong**

Why another two years? And why did he announce his retirement so early?  
MCPX

When asked these questions, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said two years was the right amount of time for him to complete his projects.

"My wish is to strengthen the party and carry out the implementation of programmes and promises made at election time," he said as he stood alongside Najib and other senior Umno leaders at packed press conference today.

"(Deputy Prime Minister) Najib (Razak) also needs time to prepare the party for the next elections - whether it's 2012 or 2013.

"During this period, I will also let Najib sit in more committees and get to know the leaders of other countries."

However, it is widely believed that the announcement was made to ensure that he could retain his presidency at the party polls in December at the cost of making himself a lame-duck premier for a rather lengthy period of two years.

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 05 Asked if the no-confidence motion moved by Pakatan Rakyat today would affect the handover, Abdullah answered "no".

"The opposition will try anything and I will face them. What they want to do is to get rid of me and Barisan Nasional as soon as possible.

"They try all sorts of stunts - inside and outside Parliament. This is as if the democracy we have and the election results are not enough," he added.

"What we want to do is to fulfill our election promises while they want to replace us."

Abdullah said he had informed the party's supreme council which met earlier today of his decision and that it was accepted with a standing ovation.

The prime minister stressed: "I informed the supreme council I've agreed with Najib that I will not lead Umno and Barisan Nasional in the next election."

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 03 Abdullah added that he told the supreme council for the first time that he will hand over power in June 2010.

"But meanwhile, I will contest for this year's elections as president," he said.

Explaining his decision, Abdullah said: "I told Najib I want him to contest as my deputy.

"I treasure our friendship and working relationship and we have a good understanding

concerning all issues affecting the party and country."

He was also confident that his deputy will continue what he had started.

"I picked him as I'm confident he can lead the party well. In the meantime, we will work to strengthen the party and attract support from everyone," said Abdullah.

At the top of his priority list for the remaining two years of his premiership is eradicating poverty.

"This was also conveyed to the Umno leaders just now at the special briefing. It was well-accepted and there was another standing ovation after I announced my decision."

### **"Pak Lah is always my leader"**

Before the question-and-answer session began, Abdullah passed the floor to his deputy.

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 03 "As announced by Abdullah, today marks the beginning of the handover of power according to Umno tradition," said Najib.

"I'm touched by his willingness to let go of his power accordingly as it is not easy to quit as Umno president and prime minister of the country.

The deputy prime minister said that the decision means that succession can be achieved in an orderly manner without any negative effects on the leaders.

"For this, I will always accept Pak Lah as my leader and I've asked the divisional leaders to nominate him as president in the December polls.

"Our strong ties will continue before and after he steps down as prime minister," Najib added.

During the special briefing, Najib said he was ready to accept the divisions' nominations for him to be deputy president.

At the press conference, Abdullah was also questioned whether today's announcement was due to pressure from within the party.

"There are a lot of views on when I should step down. What is important is my view, and I feel that I must hand over to my successor. And this is the way I've chosen and it is a process which will take time."

The handover, he explained, will help avoid splits within the party and stop further damage to Umno.

Asked about his feelings after the announcement, Abdullah drew laughter when he pretended to cry.

"I feel a little sadness, nothing more than that. I feel a sense of achievement, I have taken steps that are well received."

He added that it was a blessing for him to be able to hand over in an orderly fashion.

The prime minister also dismissed the possibility of him going back on his promise.

"I've made my decision and it's final."

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