

**PM's handover plan fails to silence critics**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Jul 11, 2008**

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's decision to step down in favour of his deputy in mid-2010 has not silenced calls for a prompt change of leadership after a drubbing in March elections.  
MCPX

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708  
05Abdullah said yesterday he had struck an agreement with his deputy Najib Razak to hand over power, but first wanted the opportunity to implement reforms and projects promised since he came to office five years ago.

The premier has faced repeated calls to resign from within his ruling Umno, after unprecedented losses in the elections and a fuel price hike that triggered public outrage.

Although his announcement was aimed at silencing these dissident factions, and averting a challenge in Umno leadership polls in December, rumblings from within have already begun.

**Muhyiddin has much to lose**

Party vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin, a potential leadership contender who has much to lose under the deal, said some in the party preferred a quicker handover and wanted to decide their new leader for themselves.

umno selangor najib muhyiddin event anti pak lah banners 160408 04"Some have expressed concern that if the duration is that long the situation will not become more convincing. This needs to be taken into account," Muhyiddin told state news agency Bernama.

"The election is still far. Why the haste to make the decision now," he said. Muhyiddin was tipped as a number-two to Najib after Abdullah's departure, but will now have to wait two years for a chance at the role.

Umno veteran Razaleigh Hamzah, a prince from Kelantan who wants to challenge Abdullah for the top job, also questioned the premier's right to hand over the party's leadership to Najib.

"It's improper for Abdullah to hand over any post as it is an elected post," he said.

tengku razaleigh forum 260408 ku li speaking"Many people are unaware that the PM must get permission from various institutions especially the King before doing this," he said.

Razaleigh told Malaysiakini yesterday that the handover was unconstitutional.

Abdullah's predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a staunch Najib ally who had a very public falling out with Abdullah, predicted that Najib will never become prime minister.

"Although Najib was promised that a transition would take place in 2010, all kinds of accusations will be hurled at him so that Najib would appear unfit to even be deputy prime

minister," Mahathir said in his blog.

"One of Abdullah's more trusted lieutenants will take over and the new person won't take over as PM in 2010 due to a lack of experience so Abdullah will continue to rule until the next elections," he added.

### **Accusations could hamper Najib, Anwar**

Najib and opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim are now gripped in a bitter political brawl, with both facing serious misconduct accusations that could prevent them from vying for the country's top post.

najib and anwar ibrahim Najib has been forced to deny accusations that he had an affair with a Mongolian woman murdered in 2006, while Anwar faces new allegations of sodomy - the same charge he was jailed over a decade ago - which he says are fabricated by the government.

Analysts are divided over the need for a quick handover, which could end political uncertainty that has hampered Malaysia's financial markets.

"A faster departure means a new leader who can start making changes to the country," said analyst Azmi Sharom.

Some, however, think the prime minister needs time to deliver on the promises that he was punished in the general elections for not delivering.

"He is putting a time frame with enough time so that he will have a visible legacy and be remembered with kindness," said pollster Ibrahim Suffian from the Merdeka Centre.

"Abdullah needs to ensure that the changes cannot be rolled back by any successor," he told AFP.