

# Bumi group to develop NC



FOLK TRADITION: Abdullah meeting with Umno members upon his arrival at the Dewan Millenium complex to chair the Kepala Batas Umno division meeting yesterday.

BY DAVID TAN

KEPALA BATAS: A consortium comprising bumiputra companies should be formed as soon as possible to develop the Northern Corridor (NC), Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Prime Minister, who welcomed the consortium proposal from the Penang Umno Youth, said he had discussed it with other state Umno leaders, adding that they, too, were happy With it.

The consortium would take up projects planned by government-linked companies such as the Sime Darby Group to develop the Northern Corridor, involving Kedah, Perlis, Penang island, Seberang Prai, and Northern Perak, he said in his keynote address at the opening of the Kepala Batas Umno division meeting here yesterday.

It was reported earlier that the development of the Northern Corridor, which comes under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, would concentrate on developing agricultural areas into important economic zones.

Projects implemented by bumiputra companies would

be supervised by a special committee under the Economic Planning Unit, he said.

He also said bumiputra companies should not transfer their projects to others as that would jeopardise the economic status of the Malays.

Abdullah also said the development of Balik Pulau should be on par with other parts of the island.

He said Penang, well known as a Silicon Valley, had an internationally-established port and an international airport.

"But areas like Balik Pulau and other rural areas of the state are lagging behind in development," he said.

Abdullah said the Penang Umno Youth should meet with the relevant authorities to obtain information and feedback on the economic status of Balik Pulau and other rural areas.

On Kepala Batas, Abdullah said it had been a rural town with few professionals and schools many years ago.

"Now, many of the people here have sons and daughters who are professionals," he said, adding that this was the result of Umno's" struggle.