

THE STAR

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## Abdullah reiterates he will defend Umno post

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has reiterated that he will defend his Umno presidency in the party elections in December.

Even though he has announced his plans for his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to take over, he has not decided precisely on the date of handover.

"Anytime doesn't mean two or three months," he said at a media briefing yesterday to media leaders attending the World Economic Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

Abdullah denied that political uncertainty had negatively impacted foreign investments and he had, in fact, received many enquiries from the Middle East.

On the economy, he said a growth of 5.5% was achievable and that some mega projects could be adjusted while those people-centric projects with immediate impact would be implemented under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"This will be after the midterm review when we will also introduce new area soft development," he said, referring to the corridor developments especially in Sabah and Sarawak.

On the criticism that some of the reform measures were still weak steps, he said:

"Reform has to be gradual. I will continue my work and it is not my attitude that just because you do not support me, I say forget it."

His priorities would be to strengthen the Anti-Corruption Agency, judiciary and police force while ensuring quality opportunities in the development corridors to address the issue of an equitable income distribution.

On the proposal to repeal the Internal Security Act, he said there could be some aspects to be reviewed and amendments.

He would not be "completely doing away with preventive detention" although ensuring justice was equally important.