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Accept transition plan, says PM

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KEPALA BATAS: Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has asked party members to accept the transition formula that he and his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Razak have agreed on.

Abdullah said the agreement had been mutually reached by him and Najib to keep the party strong and the

transition plan had also brought about stability and calm in Umno.

"I hope the formula will be accepted by all to ensure a smooth transition," he said, adding that speculative media reports prior to the agreement had caused tension in Umno.

Abdullah also reminded Umno members to guard against factionalism anywhere in the party in the run-up to the elections.

"Umno has no problems at the grassroots level.

"It was always the tussle for posts at the top leadership that caused problems which led to a split," he said, adding that members should use the elections to unite and not cause disharmony in the party.

Abdullah said this when officiating the Kepala Batas Umno, Youth, Wanita and Puteri wing branch elections yesterday.

Eighty-five branches under

the Kepala Batas division will be holding their annual meetings from now until Aug 24.

Under the succession plan, Abdullah is to hand over the post of prime minister, chairmanship of the Barisan Nasional and presidency of Umno to Najib in June 2010.

Abdullah said he would continue to lead the country for the next two years and ensure that all projects that had been planned were carried out.

"We don't want to see pro-

jects disrupted just because there are problems in the party.

"We need to concentrate on developing the country as this is what the people expect us to do."

Abdullah also touched on the March 8 elections in which Barisan Nasional lost its two-thirds majority.

He said although BN suffered a setback it did not mean the people had rejected the coalition outright.

"The people want BN to continue leading the country but they have sent us a message to improve our shortcomings.

"We need to do this quickly and pay heed to the people's demands."

Abdullah said Umno's performance in Penang, where it won 11 of the 15 state seats contested, showed the party still had sound support and reminded its members that solidarity at branch level was a pillar of its strength.