

BN can work with Pakatan in some areas, says Pak Lah
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said his ruling Barisan Nasional coalition could work with the opposition in certain areas despite earlier vows by its leaders not to cooperate. MCPX

Last week, the opposition DAP, which now control Penang state, offered a former party leader in Barisan Nasional (BN) a position as head of two development and investment groups in the state.

Lee Kah Choon - who resigned as the Gerakan party's deputy secretary-general last month after it lost control of Penang - accepted the post despite still being a member of the party.

BN members have called for Lee's ouster from Gerakan, with various coalition members denouncing his cooperation with the opposition.

But Abdullah told reporters: "We can always create a new era.

"If there is no clash in policies, then perhaps it opens the way to cooperate," he added.

Lee's decision a surprise

However, Abdullah admitted Lee's decision to work with the opposition came as a surprise. "It is something new and has not been the practice," he said.

"Normally we keep to what we want to do, and the opposition parties also keep to what they want to do," Abdullah added.

"As far as I'm concerned, this is a matter for the parties to decide whether they want it or not."

The main race-based component parties that form the BN were almost wiped out in March 8 polls as the coalition lost its two-thirds majority in parliament, while five states are now in opposition control.

Abdullah, who is facing increasing calls to resign, says he has the mandate to rule and will only discuss a transition plan to hand power to his deputy after party elections at the end of the year.