

No rotation of Penang CM's post, says Abdullah

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KUANTAN: No way. the post of Penang Chief Minister will not be rotated among leaders of Barisan Nasional component parties.

Without circling or circumventing the issue, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said: "The current policy stays ... there are no considerations for changes."

The Barisan Nasional chairman said this when asked to comment on the issue after visiting a public housing project at Permatang Pak Mahal, Kempadang, near here yesterday.

Also, present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and State Housing Committee chairman Datuk Soffi Abdul Razak.

The Nibong Tebal Umno Youth, during its meeting on Sunday, passed a resolution calling for the post of Penang Chief Minister to

be rotated among BN parties.

On Thursday, Penang Umno Youth chief Mohd Salim Abdul Barn said almost all the movement's divisions in the State would propose that the post of Chief Minister be rotated among the component parties during their respective division meetings this month.

In Kota Baru, a combative Gerakan president said Umno Youth might not know or might have forgotten the pact between BN parties on the post of Penang Chief Minister.

Datuk Seri Dr Lim Kong Yaik said the question of who should occupy the post had always been determined by a decades-old agreement among the BN component parties and did not depend on which party held the most seats in the State Legislative Assembly.

Dr Lim said an agreement had been forged between former prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and the Gerakan in 1970 that Gerakan would continue to lead the Penang Government in

return, for giving up some of its seats to other component parties.

"Umno Youth may have forgotten or does not know about the political contract Gerakan made with Razak," Dr Lim said.

He was speaking at a Press conference after opening the 25th Kelantan Gerakan delegates assembly yesterday.

Also present was his deputy and Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Dr Lim said, however, this did not mean Gerakan rejected the proposal for a system of rotation, adding that the party would leave the matter to the BN supreme council.

Later, in Kuala Terengganu, after he opened the Gerakan State delegates assembly, Dr Lim was asked if the issue was raised because some people were dissatisfied with the situation in Penang.

He said: "Are you sure it was due to dissatisfaction? Or is there a *udang di sebalik batu* (hidden agenda)? If that is the case, I will have to throw all the *batu* and eat

all the 'prawns'.

"there is a time for dialogue, but please do not challenge openly. It is not the time to do so."

In Butterworth, MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy rejected calls to rotate the post, saying the current system had proved effective.

"We do not see any reason for the current system to be changed as the political situation in Penang is stable enough," he said after visiting Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Sin Chung in Permatang Sintok here.

In Besut, Umno Youth chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said Koh should take a look at the root of the matter.

"Something must not be right if the Penang Umno Youth made such a statement.

"It could be a long-standing issue yet to be solved, but there is no need to challenge anyone's authority.

"Maybe he (Koh) should get closer to the Umno Youth, if these efforts fail, I am willing to assist."