

# PM urges all parties to accept Lina Joy decision

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The prime minister has urged all parties to accept the Lina Joy decision, saying that the Federal Court had ruled independently in the landmark case.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the government had never expected the court to make a decision which was politically favourable to it.

"I have never expected or pressured the court to make a political decision. If we allow ourselves to be influenced by emotion, we will think of all sorts of things," he said yesterday - after chairing the monthly Umno supreme council meeting.

"I believe the judges took into account all the facts of the case to make their decision, and they have made it," he said.

Abdullah said people should not read too much into the court's split decision on Wednesday to dismiss Lina's appeal to have her religious status amended by the National Registration Department.

"They have the wrong perception, what can we do? The court has made a decision. There are many decisions the court has made that we (the government) are not happy with, but what can we do?"

"The decision was based on the Constitution. It is a set of laws that we have to follow. This country has law, we uphold the Constitution, the sanctity of it, otherwise we would not succeed," he said.

Abdullah said the laws of the country were enacted by parliament, which has a multi-racial composition.

He dismissed foreign news reports claiming that Malaysia had rejected Christianity.

"They are ignorant, they don't know about our country. If they don't know it then that is what they will say. They must know Islam and Christianity have many similarities, including the prophets that both religions have in common. There is no reason why we should be anti-Christian," he said.

The prime minister denied that the country was being riven by a religious divide.

"Although discussions on religion are more widespread, they do not represent a divide," he said. On concerns that retailers

would take the opportunity of the civil servants' pay hike to inflate prices, Abdullah said the retail sector had no excuse for doing so.

"All retailers should be happy that so many civil servants will receive a salary hike, and they would want to spend their money. The demand for goods will increase and everyone will benefit."

Abdullah said if retailers ensured that prices were held down, they could profit as their sales volume would increase.

Although action would be taken against price gouging, he said this did not mean the government was trying to stop retailers from profiting. "Please understand, we don't want to deprive retailers of profits, but they will continue to earn a profit even without raising prices."