

No decision on merger yet, says Abdullah

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PUTRAJAYA: No final decision has been made on the proposed *New Straits Times* and *Utusan Malaysia* merger, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"The supreme council is still waiting for feedback the parties involved for the proposed plan," the Prime Minister and party president said.

"As far as I am concern no action has been taken and everything remains as it is."

The proposal was sent to the drawing board hours after several council members voiced their concern at last month's council meeting over the deal, and also the long connection between the party and *Utusan Malaysia*.

They feared that any merger affecting the identity of the Malay daily would backfire on the party, although Umno would continue to control it.

Abdullah said prior to this, the Government had given its views to the parties which proposed to merge *Utusan* and NSTP under one entity, that is, Media Prima Bhd.

Currently, Umno owns 43% in NSTP through its investment arm Media Prima Bhd. The ruling party also controls all private free to air TV stations, namely, TV3, Ntv7, 8TV and Channel 9 through Media Prima.

Umno also holds more than 50% stake in *Utusan Melayu*.