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# Abdullah to be sworn in as prime minister today

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be sworn in as prime minister today — two days after the Barisan Nasional won the 12th general election with a simple majority.

He is expected to be sworn in about 10am today. Yesterday, Abdullah had an audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin to inform him that BN had won enough seats to form a new government.

He arrived at 6.10pm at the Istana Terengganu in Jalan Kia Peng, accompanied by palace officials.

He left the palace after spending 50 minutes in discussion with the king. He did not stop to talk to reporters who waited outside the palace entrance.

Abdullah said there is no question of him resigning as prime minister because he is still getting strong support, especially from Umno leaders.

"I don't see why I should resign, simply because we have won," the BN chairman and Umno president told about 1,000 Umno supporters who had turned up earlier

to express their support at the banquet hall of his official residence, Sri Perdana.

"Do I look sick? I am not scared or afraid of anybody, except God.

"I will continue to fight our causes and I will not resign," he said, adding that he received lots of SMSes that he had stepped down following BN's defeats in five states.

The moment he walked into the hall under police escort about 8.30pm, chants of "Hidup Pak Lah and Hidup Umno" erupted.

An Umno follower shouted, "Whatever happens to Pak Lah, we will remain loyal to you," followed by thunderous claps.

Abdullah said although BN did not get a two-thirds majority, the fact remained that the coalition still won the general election.

"I will be sworn in as the prime minister before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong at 11am tomorrow (today).

"I promise you that I will continue to strengthen Umno and the BN to ensure that we can implement our manifesto for a safe, peaceful and progressive nation."

He also said Umno leaders had expressed their support for him to continue as prime minister.

Abdullah expressed his grati-

tude to the people who had supported BN to enable it to form the government.

Present at Sri Perdana to voice their support for Abdullah were his deputy, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, information head Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and vice-chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Umno Youth head Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and Umno supreme council members Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin, Datuk Azalina Said and Datuk Mohd Zain Mohamad, Puteri head Datuk Noraini Ahmad, newly-elected Tasek Gelugor member of parliament Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yacop, former information minister Datuk Paduka Kadir Sheikh Fadzir and Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis.

Other BN leaders, including MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Parti Bersatu Sabah president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan were also there.

Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Zulhasnan Rafique, Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mo-

hammad Hassan, Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam and Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor were seen entering Sri Perdana after 2pm.

Former deputy prime minister Tun Musa Hitam and his wife also arrived in the evening to meet Abdullah and his wife, Datin Paduka Seri Jeanne Abdullah.

Meanwhile, supporters stood guard at the entrance to his house when told that Abdullah would be seeking an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong later in the evening.

About 6pm, Abdullah was seen leaving Sri Perdana.

The crowd did not budge despite the drizzle and Abdullah, acknowledging the support and shouts of *Hidup Pak Lah, Hidup Umno!*, wound down his window and waved.

Hishammuddin said Umno Youth was solidly behind the prime minister. "Umno Youth is behind the leadership and will continue to give its support (to Abdullah)."

In **Kota Kinabalu**, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman declared his support for Abdullah.

He said Malaysians needed his leadership.