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Rukunegara Carnival at the Penang International Sports Arena

# Pak Lah: Time to close ranks

## Barisan chairman calls for support from those not picked as candidates

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**PENANG:** Close ranks as the decision on Barisan Nasional's candidates list is final.

This is the message Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had for his members.

"Please do not protest against what has been decided by the leaders. I want unity in the party.

"I hope those who have not been selected will accept the decision," he said of the last-minute changes made to the Umno lists in Perlis, Perak and Terengganu following protests.

Abdullah, who is Barisan chairman, hoped the changes would not adversely affect the coalition's performance.

"When we are not selected, we must support others who are chosen," he said after opening a Rukunegara Carnival at the Penang International Sports Arena yesterday.

He also called on new candidates to give due respect to former elected representatives who were not retained.

Abdullah said there would be no more changes in the list of candidates unless those chosen were found to be ineligible.

He said the list was amended "in recent hours" because of requests to reinstate elected representatives who were dropped.

"Such requests are not peculiar to Penang. Usually supporters of former reps still like them and still support them although they are dropped," added Abdullah.

He said it was normal for certain quarters to request for reconsideration when certain elected representatives were dropped or when certain potential candidates were not chosen.

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DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

"But the changes will not affect Umno's performance. We can still win. We have to ensure the voters are with us," he said.

Abdullah hoped the changes to the line-up would not cause factions within the party.

"We have a 13-day campaigning period before polling day. I hope during this period, the party machinery will help defuse the situation to get the best support for the party," he said, adding that he was optimistic the situation would improve.

Outside Pisa, some 100 people carrying banners and placards had gathered to urge Abdullah to retain one-term Batu Maung assemblyman Mansor Musa who has been replaced by Bayan Baru Umno division youth chief Norman Zahalan.

Abdullah, when asked to comment, said the protest was nothing extraordinary.

"It's normal. When someone is not chosen, his supporters will express dissatisfaction. Some are more vocal. Some come and see me quietly.

"Until nomination day, people will keep lobbying," he said.