

Mahathir told of son's resignation through a third party

By SA'ODAH ELIAS

STAR 28 APR 2001

DUBAI: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday he was not aware that his son had resigned as the chief executive officer of Pantai Holdings Bhd and Tongkah Holdings Bhd.

The Prime Minister said he did not instruct Mokhzani to do so.

A third party told him of the news reports about the matter, he said.

"I don't know why he resigned. I don't know what he had done that had tarnished my image," he added.

"But there was an allegation in

the Dewan Rakyat that a contract for a distribution centre in Subang was given to Kamunting Corporation, said to be owned by Mokhzani," he told Malaysian reporters here after visiting the world's most opulent hotel, the *Burj Al-Arab*.

"His company bought another company which owned shares in Kamunting.

"When calculated, the percentage of my son's ownership in Kamunting comes to only 0.2%," Dr Mahathir said.

"If someone is said to own a company by having only 0.2% shares in it, then many village peo-

ple who bought PNB Unit Trust shares are owners of many giant companies in the country because on the average they will own between 0.1% to 0.2% of shares in companies where PNB had invested," he said.

Asked if he felt sad over the issue, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know what to feel."

He added that his main concern was that Mokhzani should not have had any business that had linkages with the Government."

The Prime Minister said he was aware that Mokhzani had shares in a company dealing with hospitals but, he added, it was not through

his influence.

He said whenever business matters are discussed in the Cabinet involving its members, the person concerned would have to leave the meeting.

"I had left Cabinet meetings many times although the matters being discussed did not directly involve my family members," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he expected some people would interpret the issue differently.

"Never mind them. They will slander whatever we do," he said.

On his visit to the Gulf state, Dr Mahathir said it was more success-

ful than he expected it to be.

He said besides delivering his keynote address at the Emirates International Forum he also found out about several business opportunities for Malaysians here.

"I found that they have an aluminium smelting plant which uses local technology with a generating capacity of 6,000 tonnes per year," he said.

He added that a plant of that size can use all of the power to be generated by the Bakun power plant.

■ Be ambassadors, Malaysians overseas told ... Page Three