

Abdullah: I believe in an open policy

KUALA LUMPUR: The Prime Minister said he believes in an "open policy" as he can hear what the people have to say.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi added that some people had tried to dissuade him from continuing with such a policy, saying it had created a situation where he was viewed by some as having "lost control" of the government.

"But I believe in it because I can hear what others have to say. Of course I do, at some stage, reply to those who criticise.

"Some believe I should not allow it to fester but it is alright because this is a new situation and people are confused. It is a departure from before.

"Now, the people and even the backbenchers can freely

criticise the government," he said during a question-and-answer session at a dinner organised by the Kuala Lumpur Business Club last night.

The Shangri-la Hotel ballroom where the dinner was held was packed with corporate leaders.

To another question, Abdullah said the government could not implement the open tender system for everything, as some jobs had to be given to contractors with specific expertise.

"Not all government jobs can be given through open tenders. But what I want to stress is that there will be no corruption and no abuse of power.

"Of course, whether it is going to be open tender or negotiated tender, the rules will be made clear.

"We don't want the rule of the game to be changed later and some people get disqualified because of it."

The Prime Minister also expressed concern over the use of the short messaging service (SMS) to spread rumours, adding that rumour mongering in Malaysia was "terrible".

He described the SMS as the most abused service in the country, adding that some people were willing to spend thousands of ringgit just to spread rumours via SMS.

"Now I am quite worried as I hear that some members of Rakan Cop are to be provided with hand phone. I don't know what kind of messages they are going to get."