

I did not mislead people over Scomi, says PM

• By M K. Megan
megan@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi did not mislead Malaysians over Scomi Group Bhd contracts.

Latest reports he received on the matter indicated that the company, in which his son Kamaluddin has an interest, did not win local contracts through special favours but through open tenders. And this matched with what he had said in a TV3 interview on Aug 7 that Kamaluddin had never asked for and had never received business favours from the government.

"I would like to point out that what I had said about the company was correct. No project was given to Scomi with my knowledge and I have not personally given any kind of permission to grant favours or, for that matter, projects (to Scomi)," he told reporters after opening an Islamic exhibition yesterday.

Abdullah asked for a report on

Scomi after reading a letter accusing him of lying about the company's activities. The letter referred to and disputed what he had said in the TV3 interview.

Abdullah did not reveal the letter writer's name but had added that he received the letter after the interview was aired.

He had earlier said that the letter had some information that he was not aware of since he did not manage his son's business.

The Prime Minister last Sunday also said he was willing to apologise if what he had said about Sco' mi's business, interests in the interview was proved wrong..

He said he received the report from Scomi two days ago and had gone through it thoroughly.

"I also checked the statements that I made during the TV interview. I asked my officers to transcribe it and checked it again and what I had said was not-wrong."

On other matters, Abdullah said he was not surprised that two Malaysians were caught for terrorism 'activities and had been moved from CIA prisons to Guan-

tanamo Bay for trials.

"Malaysians have been involved in such activities. I am not surprised. It has happened before."

He, however, said he had instructed foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar to get in touch with Malaysian Embassy officials in Washington to get more details,

"It is important that we should ensure that the two get a fair trial in open court."

Asked if the two, identified as Mohammed Nazir Lep, better known as Lillie, and Mohd Farik Amin, known as Zubair, would he brought back to Malaysia, Abdullah, who is also the Internal Security Minister, said the offences were committed under US laws and therefore they should be tried under that country's laws.

Asked if he was worried about the increasing trend of young Malaysians getting involved in terrorism activities, Abdullah said it was not a trend.

On the appointment of Tan Sri Musa Hassan as the new Inspector-General of Police, Abdullah

said he was the best man for the job.

"I believe he can perform his task well. He has a good reputation and he is a man of integrity."

Musa replaced the retiring Tan Sri Mohd Bakri Omar as the top cop on Thursday.

Earlier in his speech, Abdullah reminded Muslims to recite the Quran as often as possible.

He said he had been reciting the Quran twice daily from a young age. Every time he went through it he found something fascinating.

Abdullah urged Muslims to take advantage of the exhibition to know more about the Quran.

He said he was not aware that the idea to hold such an exhibition was mooted by his late wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmud.

"Only today Tan Sri Sved Mokhtar Albukhary (old me about my late wife's wish.

"I think she wanted to show how glorious the Quran is."

Syed Mokhtar, who was also at the function, is the executive chairman of the Albukhary Foundation.