

# It benefits civil service

## Pak Lah explains the need to extend contracts of some officers

**PUTRAJAYA:** The practice of offering contracts to senior government officers after their retirement will continue despite it causing unhappiness among serving officers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the decision to extend the contract of some senior officers was normally made because the Government felt their services were still needed.

However, he stressed that not all officers would have their contracts extended.

"There are several reasons why such a decision is made. This depends on the evaluation of the heads of departments on the necessity of the officer to continue," he told reporters after attending the Internal Security Ministry's monthly gathering here yesterday.

"Health and the ability to continue to serve are part of the criteria. We also find that those who are supposed to succeed are not ready.

"But the bottom line is that such a decision is made because this is for the good of the service."

Abdullah was asked on the trend by the Government to extend the contract of senior government officials, including the Chief Secretary to the Government, several secretaries-general and the top brass of the police force after they had reached the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Tan Sri Samsudin Osman's contract as the chief secretary will expire on March 2 while IGP Tan Sri Bakri Omar's contract is expiring in September.

The Prime Minister said he

was aware that the practice was causing unhappiness among serving officers.

"There are those who are angry that some are offered contracts which can pose a problem to those who are hoping for an extension. There are also those who do not like the practice as it will affect their chances of moving up the ladder," he said.

"Whatever the Government decides, we will be mindful that it will be for the benefit of the department and service."

The decision-making can be

difficult. Sometimes when a decision is made, it will not be popular with some groups but will be accepted by others.

Asked whether Samsudin's contract would be extended again, Abdullah replied: "I will not speculate."

The Prime Minister was also asked on the progress in negotiations with Singapore to build a new bridge over the Johor Strait.

"Our negotiations with Singapore have not been concluded; it is being handled by the Foreign Ministry," he said.

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