

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 27/10/2007

PM angry over loss of lives in bungled drug raid

NST- 27/10/2007

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KEPALA BATAS: The prime minister has questioned the conduct of a police drug raid in Sungai Buloh, in which two policemen were shot dead and two injured.

Expressing outrage over the Thursday night incident, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the operation could have been better executed if it had been better planned.

"I am angry that the policemen were shot. It looks like the approach used was not right.

"It could have been executed better, with back-up squads to cordon off the area. This would have put the police in a better posi-

tion to face the eventuality of a shoot-out," he said.

Abdullah said the policemen had gone to the suspected drug lab without preparation and this had contributed to the tragedy.

He was asked to comment on the shooting at a double-storey terrace house in Kampung Desa Aman, Sungai Buloh, about 7.30pm.

Lance Corporal K. Jaya Balan Krishnan from the Gombak police headquarters and Lance Corporal Alagesan Malapan from the city police headquarters were killed, while Chief Inspector R. Rajakumar from the Commercial Crime Department and Chief Inspector Helmi Zakaria from the Gombak narcotics division

were wounded.

The policemen had apparently gone to the house to investigate after receiving a tip-off.

However, when they arrived at the scene, several men in two cars swooped in and opened fire on the policemen before fleeing.

Abdullah said Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan had briefed him on the ambush.

He said Musa had assured him police would go all out to apprehend the suspects, believed to be members of a group that had been using the house as a drug lab.

Abdullah was also asked if criminals had become more brazen in using firearms. The shooting on Thursday night was the third time this week policemen were shot

while on duty.

To this, he said: "Yes, we can make that conclusion, but at the same time I was also informed by Musa that the operation could have been planned better. Instead, the policemen just rushed to the scene.

"We are dealing with people who face the death sentence. If they are caught and convicted of drug trafficking. That is why they are willing to shoot at the policemen to evade arrest."

The prime minister, who is also member of parliament for Kepala Batas, was speaking yesterday after launching Kepala Batas Hospital's Traditional and Complementary Medicine Unit, a pilot project under the Health Ministry.