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News reports on fund not accurate

MEDIA reports on the misuse of the Tsunami Disaster Fund were inaccurate, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said. He said the Auditor-General's report had actually referred to the National Disaster Fund and not the balance of the Tsunami Disaster Fund.

“The media report claiming the excess from the Tsunami Disaster Fund amounting to RM6.7mil not being returned by the enforcement agencies to the Treasury is inaccurate and misleading,” he said while winding up the debate on Budget 2007 for the Prime Minister's Department. Nazri said the Auditor-General had written a letter to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and explained that there was no excess in the fund for tsunami victims. The RM6.7mil which was supposedly missing was in fact being managed by several government agencies. He said the figure did not involve the special fund for tsunami victims contributed by the public. On another matter, Nazri said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi stood by what he said during an interview on TV3 recently that his son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin had not influenced any of his decisions in matters relating to the country's administration.

“If his (Khairy) feedback was needed, it will be based on his capacity as the deputy Umno Youth chief and not as a family member,” he said. To a question by Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang, who had questioned Abdullah's credibility in relation to claims that Scomi Bhd were given government projects, Nazri said the prime minister had stressed that no projects were awarded to Scomi without his knowledge. Abdullah had also said that he was not personally involved in approving any projects to Scomi or its subsidiaries, Nazri added.

Replying to Karpal Singh (DAP – Bukit Gelugor) who questioned the Government's stance on his criticism of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Nazri said the Cabinet had decided that all ministers should back the Government's decision in countering criticisms made against it, including by Dr Mahathir. When asked about Datuk Zaid Ibrahim's (BN – Kota Baru) call for the Government to take note of Dr Mahathir's suggestions, Nazri said: “The Government also takes note of Dr Mahathir's record in sidelining past leaders such as Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, Tun Hussein Onn and the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.”