

Reveal names of those given APs to silence accusations

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Government should divulge the names of those who have been given approved permits (APs) to import cars as a means of removing any suspicion of improper conduct, Proton Holding Bhd adviser Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"The best way to silence any accusation of unfairness is to publish the names of all who have been given APs, how many permits they have received and what cars they are bringing in," he said at a press conference at his residence here yesterday.

He was responding to reports that the Government was continuing to issue APs for completely built-up units.

The Government's statement came following his comment that the local automobile industry would suffer if the entry of foreign cars was not controlled.

He said that it was unfair that the cars from certain countries were being sold here while Proton cars were not allowed to be sold in those countries.

He said if many APs had been issued, there would naturally be many foreign cars entering the country, adding that such parallel importing of vehicles brought in three times as many cars as those imported by agents.

"In order to know exactly how many cars are being brought in, the best way is for the Customs Department to publish the names of those who have been given APs."

He said he adopted this approach - after being accused of cronyism in 1998 when he was prime minister. He displayed a list of names of all who had received Government contracts.

"It turned out that the family members of those who talked about cronyism had received contracts, while my family only received one contract."

Dr Mahathir said some of the cars that were imported were very cheap, as low as RM11,000.

"I don't understand how this could happen. The price of some imported cars is so low that it is not even enough to make a car," he said.

He called for investigations into how this could have happened.

"I asked for such investigations when I was prime minister but somehow, it was never followed through."