

Not right to reveal names of AP holders, says Rafidah

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SHAH ALAM: The Government finds it inappropriate to publicise the names of those given approved permits (APs) to import vehicles.

"These people are in business and I do not see any reason we should make this public especially when we have been mentioning their names in Parliament very often," said International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

She was commenting on a statement by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the names be made public to remove any suspicion of improper conduct.

Dr Mahathir had also said that the local car industry would suffer if the entry of foreign cars was not controlled.

Rafidah said the names were never publicised even during the time Dr Mahathir was prime minister nor did he ask her to do so.

"I also wish to clear the air that the APs are issued on merit by a committee from my ministry and I'm not involved in the process," she added.

Rafidah defended the move to allow APs as it has helped the development of the national car industry.

"The AP ruling allows the government to control the number of car dealers who are importing cars from overseas.

"The AP is only granted to those who have obtained sole distributorship from the foreign car manufacturers.

"Proton will cease operations tomorrow if the government decides to waive the AP restrictions on car importers," she told reporters after opening the Kanzen Stainless Processors Sdn Bhd here yesterday.

Under the circumstances, Rafidah said, Proton should not be complaining as the Government had done its part to protect the interest of the local cars.

She said Proton was expected to produce cars of the highest quality so that they could be sold locally and overseas.

"Proton has been selling cars to the Middle East, Africa, Europe and US but the numbers have dropped in the recent years," she said.

Rafidah said 14,865 Proton cars were exported in 1994 and the figure increased to 25,686 cars in 1997.

In 2003, the figure dropped to 7,622 units.