

Dr M: Approved Permits still the issue

STAR - 2 SEP 2005

KUALA LUMPUR: Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said whether or not Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz apologised to him, the issue of the Approved Permits still persists and it would still have to be resolved.

Pointing out that it was not a battle between him and the International Trade and Industry Minister, but about Proton and the Approved Permits issue, he said:

"Whether she apologises or does not apologise, hug or no hug, the problem is still the APs, because if they keep on giving the APs and people keep on under-declaring then they are cheating the Government, and the Government will lose money."

He confirmed that International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz did not apologise to him when she embraced him on Wednesday.

"She hugged me and everybody saw that. Nothing happened," he said.

On why Rafidah cried, he said: "I don't know. You have to ask her that."

He also said he did not say much to Rafidah, apart from "It's okay," and patting her on the shoulder.

"When people cry, you say it's okay and the pat on the shoulder is part of the okay," he said after opening *A Beautiful Mind: The Grand Exhibition* at Galeri Tangsi here last night.

He also said he did not harbour any hard feelings towards Rafidah.

On how he had felt after she embraced him, he said: "After she hugged me, no more feeling lah."

Asked if he felt better now, he said: "It's not a cure, I'm having a cold."