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RAFIDAH-LETTER

LETTER TO DR M READY, SAYS RAFIDAH

IPOH, July 7 (Bernama) -- Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz today said that a letter to former premier, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, addressing several issues raised by the Proton adviser in relation to the country's automotive policy, was ready.

She said her Special Officer would be sending the letter to Dr Mahathir at an appropriate time.

"The letter is not an explanation but it contains all the facts that had been (also) passed on to the Cabinet last night," Rafidah told reporters after "An Evening With UMNO Wanita Chief" organised by Wanita Umno Perak at the official residence of the Menteri Besar, here, today.

"After this, there would be no more addition (to the letter)," she said.

Rafidah said that she had prepared the letter which contained all the facts, statistics and information related to the issues raised by Dr Mahathir in the media.

The Cabinet at its meeting yesterday had directed Rafidah to write a letter to Dr Mahathir replying to all the issues raised pertaining to the government's automotive policy.

A copy of the letter has been also sent to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, she said.

Speaking to reporters in Kuala Lumpur today, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Minister of International Trade and Industry "had to reply because the issues concerned her ministry."

Among the issues raised by Dr Mahathir was the concentration of Approved Permits (AP) on only a few companies, the government's auto policy as well as the entry of foreign cars at very low prices which reduced the national car's competitiveness.

Dr Mahathir had said this at a press conference called last Tuesday where he defended Proton Chief Executive Officer Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff's outburst and criticism of the government's auto policy in an interview the latter gave to Oriental Daily, a Chinese language newspaper.

She said the letter contained all the relevant information and the stand taken on all the issues raised.

Asked if she would be meeting Dr Mahathir on the matter, Rafidah said that as at this point, she had no plans to do that as she would be starting her leave from tomorrow.

On whether she would be meeting him after her leave, Rafidah said that she was not sure.

On the contents of the letter, she said: "No comment. Please do not raise the issue any further... my explanation to Tun (Dr Mahathir) and the Cabinet is good enough.

"It is not proper to raise the matter in the media. Enough..stop raising the matter. I can use the media (to raise this issue) but I don't want to do that. I have chosen to write a letter as requested by the Cabinet," she said. -- BERNAMA

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