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MAHATHIR-AP

MAHATHIR DECLINES COMMENT ON 2004 AP LIST

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

KUALA LUMPUR, July 28 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today declined to make further comments on the Approved Permits (APs) issue following the release of the 2004 AP list last night by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Dr Mahathir covered both his ears when followed by a group of newsmen to get his comments on the issue.

"No, no... enough," he said, smiling as he walked towards his car when reporters asked him to comment on the new AP list after delivering a luncheon address at the Third Asia Economic Summit, here today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was in Johannesburg on a three-day visit to South Africa, has ordered the issuance of the 2004 AP list following Dr Mahathir's call Tuesday for the release of the list.

The list showed that there was not much difference from the name of companies that received the most APs this year.

Asked whether he will give a press conference to reply on the matter, Dr Mahathir said: "Better not."

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir cracked a joke about the AP issue.

As he spoke about China not having military ambition, he said: "For me, I am not afraid of China. But I worry about people who talk about pre-emptive attacks, the rights to regime change.

"China I hope will never think about changing the regime of Malaysia. They have a very good government here.

"Very considerate. Off and on, APs are given to the wrong people," drawing laughter from those in attendance.

"Those are minor things," he added. -- BERNAMA

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