

07/07/2005

MITI-APs

MITI SAYS 51,713 APs GIVEN OUT LAST YEAR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 (Bernama) -- MITI has clarified that it gave out a total of 51,713 Approved Permits (APs) last year and not 67,000 APs as claimed by Proton adviser and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Deputy minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Mah Siew Keong, in giving out the figures said: "I just wanted to clarify the official figure."

He was speaking to reporters after the opening ceremony of the 16th Malaysia International Machinery Fair (MIMF) here, today.

At a press conference early this week, Dr Mahathir had claimed that out of the 67,000 APs issued last year, only 12,600 were given to 82 companies while the bulk of 54,000 APs were given to 20 companies.

Among other issues raised by Dr Mahathir was the concentration of APs 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.

Meanwhile, in his speech, Mah said that the total trade value of food-packing, rubber-plastics processing and print-labelling machineries from January to May this year came to RM2.52 billion.

Out of this, RM1.71 billion accounted for imports, while RM813.7 million were exports.

Last year, Malaysia had imported more of these products, he said.

"The imports stood at RM4.13 billion while exports stood at RM1.74 billion," he said.

Mah said that the government had introduced attractive fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for producers or assemblers in its effort to make Malaysia the regional production hub and the main distribution and maintenance related services centre for machinery and equipment industry in the region.

The machinery and equipment industry is one of the key areas for growth and development, he said.

In 2004, about 81 projects with total investment of RM406.8 million were approved in the industry.

He said a lot of incentives including tax allowances had been also given to encourage machinery and equipment factories to come into Malaysia.

"We hope Malaysia can be regional hub for this industry in the region," he said. -- BERNAMA

MAZ MR SD