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PM-APs

PM DIRECTS RAFIDAH TO PUBLISH FULL LIST OF AP HOLDERS

By: Salbiah Said

JOHANNESBURG (South Africa), July 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today directed Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz to publish the full list of Approved Permit (AP) holders to avoid negative perceptions from the public.

"Okay publish all, publish all. There's no need to keep. Why should we keep. If by keeping we create negative perceptions, that's not right, that's wrong," he told the Malaysian media at the end of his three-day official visit to South Africa.

He said this in response to allegations from former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the government did not issue the full list to the public.

Rafidah, who was at the press conference, said that she would publish the full list including those owning showrooms.

In a quick response, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry released the list of 2004 AP holders in Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier at the press conference, Abdullah said that he had no intention of not publishing what had already been made public.

"The list was the latest until 2005 and the public has seen the latest list. If there's anything that has been left out inadvertently, then we would furnish further. But Rafidah would be in a better position. I have given and published the list on that day," he said .

The prime minister said he was looking at the AP issue from major aspects.

"We may have to review the policy and introduce stricter regulations on the issuance of open APs to prevent abuse. They should be importing cars and selling cars and not selling APs," Abdullah said.

On the franchise APs, he said that the government would also have to review the issuance in the interests of the future, but said that he was not in a position to announce the details on the matter.

As for Proton board's decision not to renew its Chief Executive Officer Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff's contract, he said it was the board's decision which was properly made.

On Tengku Mahaleel's successor, Abdullah said that the new CEO would be experienced and one who had served about 12 years with Proton.

"We'll see who's going to be the CEO. It will not be a foreigner. Don't start speculating," he said when asked to comment on talks that a foreigner might be appointed to replace Tengku Mahaleel.

Abdullah said that clarifications on the matter should be made by the board.

"They will know the answer. I would give the board the benefit of the doubt. The board must act in the interest of Proton as the national car manufacturer. They must have the interest of the national car at heart," the premier said.

"They must ensure that there's been progress by Proton. That is certainly what I want to see. Details of the management are matters for them to decide. I will leave them to make the best of decisions in the interest of the board.

"They may have many reasons for whatever they have done. I would like to remind them and make this statement, that decisions must be made in the interest and progress and development of Proton."

Tengku Mahaleel is on leave effective July 26 prior to his retirement

on Sept 30, 2005.

Following the decision to terminate Tengku Mahaleel's contract, Proton appointed Datuk Kisai Rahmat, who was Director of Operations and Datuk Kamarulzaman Darus, Chief Executive Officer of Proton Tanjung Malim Sdn Bhd, as joint operating officers to run Proton Holdings Bhd effective July 26.

Later, after the press conference, Rafidah told reporters that she was too hurt to reply to Dr Mahathir's allegations. -- BERNAMA

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