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AP-REVIEW

PM'S OFFICE SAYS AP SYSTEM TO BE REVIEWED

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- The Approved Permit (AP) system for the import of vehicles needs to be reviewed as there are weaknesses in the existing system, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement today.

The statement said the Cabinet, which held its meeting today, had discussed the AP issue in detail.

"The results of the review will be taken into account in the National Automotive Policy to be announced next month," it added.

The four-paragraph statement said for the time being, the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, need not make any statement to the media until the policy had been announced.

Rafidah was today asked to brief her Cabinet colleagues on the AP issue.

The controversy surrounding the issuance of APs was raised by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir had alleged that the uncontrolled issuance of APs by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry had caused the entry of relatively cheap foreign-made cars into country as well as the malpractice of under-declaration which had jeopardised the sales of national cars.

The former prime minister had also questioned as to why APs were monopolised by certain bumiputera businessmen.

As a result of Dr Mahathir's remarks, the Prime Minister's Office had issued a list of AP recipients between 2004 and 2005.

Of the 67,000 APs that were issued this year, more than 28,000 were given to three individuals -- Tan Sri Nasimuddin SM Amin, Datuk Syed Azman Syed Ibrahim and Datuk Mohd Haniff Abdul Aziz.

On the National Automotive Policy, the statement said the first draft had been prepared by MITI.

"The Cabinet takes the view that the draft needs to be fine-tuned with greater care. As such, a committee under the Prime Minister's Department has been set up to hold discussions to formulate the National Automotive Policy," it said.

The committee will take into consideration all views and suggestions from all quarters.

The statement said the prime minister would be the chairman of the committee and its members would comprise Cabinet ministers.

"The policy to be announced will tackle all problems which had emerged as a result of the (AP) issue and will safeguard the position of Proton as a national car," it added. -- BERNAMA

MKO MAD SHY