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ABDULLAH-PROTON

PROTON ISSUE SETTLED, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, July 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi believes that the issues raised by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad relating to the automotive industry and Proton, and replied by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, are settled.

"I believe so because explanations have been given," he said when asked whether he considered the matter to have been settled.

He also confirmed that the letter had been sent to and received by Dr Mahathir, who is also the advisor to Proton.

"(However), I am not going to reveal the content (because) the letter is for Tun (Dr Mahathir)," he told reporters after delivering a keynote address at a workshop on the implementation of Islam Hadhari at national level here today.

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

Copies of the letter have been given to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Among the issues raised by Dr Mahathir was the concentration of Approved Permits (AP) on only a few companies, the government's automotive 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 criticisms of the government's automotive policy in an interview with Oriental Daily, a Chinese language newspaper. -- BERNAMA

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