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Rafidah-Reporters

RAFIDAH CONTINUES TO AVOID REPORTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 29 (Bernama) -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz today continued to evade reporters who have been "pursuing" her since Tuesday when former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad alleged that she had not told the truth on the issue of Approved Permits (APs) for importing cars.

Efforts by reporters to interview her at her ministry here today again met a brick wall when security personnel kept journalists away.

Reporters were told that Rafidah, who is also Wanita Umno Chief, was having a closed-door meeting with Wanita Umno exco members on the sixth floor of the ministry building.

"Sorry ... where are you from? The Press? This is a closed-door meeting, reporters are not allowed in," a security personnel said when a reporter tried to take the lift to the sixth floor.

However, this did not dampen the spirit of some reporters who chose to wait for the meeting to be over.

Three hours later, several of the exco members who were earlier seen entering the building, including Datuk Dr Norraesah Mohamad, were seen leaving. Rafidah was nowhere to be seen.

Yesterday, on her return from South Africa after accompanying a delegation led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on a visit to the country, Rafidah was reported to have been whisked off in a waiting four-wheel drive vehicle when reporters tried to approach her.

When in South Africa, Rafidah was reported to have chosen to remain mum when asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's statement regarding the APs. When pressed, she only said, "God is my witness" and "Ask the Prime Minister".

In his latest claim, Dr Mahathir, who is also advisor to national car maker Proton Holdings Bhd, said that besides not providing a complete list of AP recipients, Rafidah had also misled delegates on the issue at the Umno General Assembly last week.

Following that, the government Wednesday made public AP recipients for 2004, in addition to the 2005 list that was released earlier.

Newspapers today reported Dr Norraesah as saying that Rafidah and Dr Mahathir should need to resolve the issue.

-- BERNAMA

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