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No limit on CBU vehicles imported from Asean

By ZURAIMI ABDULLAH

CAR dealers with approved permits (APs) may import as many completely built-up unit (CBU) vehicles from Asean nations as they want, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said yesterday.

However, a limit is still imposed on car imports from non-Asean nations, she said.

"The import requirements for non-Asean vehicles remain. There is now no limit on the number of CBU vehicles from Asean. We will give 500 if an AP holder asks for that figure," Rafidah said.

"APs for Asean CBU vehicles are now only for the purpose of monitoring and collecting data," she told reporters after meeting with import permit holders in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Rafidah said the restriction is to prevent national cars and other locally-assembled vehicles from "being swarmed" with non-Asean vehicles.

The Government had capped the non-Asean car volume at 10 per cent of the total vehicles produced locally ever since it started giving out APs in 1970, said the Association of Malay Importers and Traders of Motor Vehicles of Malaysia.

"Fully imported non-Asean cars will seriously compete with other cars if there is no ceiling at all," its honorary secretary Mohamed Jusoh said.

On questions about the Government's possible big tax collection losses from undervalued imported vehicles, Rafidah clarified that the Royal Customs Department was responsible for ensuring that AP holders do not cheat.

"If there is any undervaluation, the Customs is responsible to investigate and take action. The issue is beyond us. Miti (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) is just an AP issuer.

"I had told this to the Cabinet several years ago during (former Prime Minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's time.

"The Customs has to ensure that importers pay and declare the right duties and value (of the vehicles)."

There are currently 116 AP holders being classified under two groups: franchise holders for certain car marques and non-franchise holder importers.

Rafidah said franchise holders were allocated APs for 45,188 vehicles, while non-franchise holders got about 15,020.

Of the figures, franchise holders brought in 32,698 vehicles, while 14,123 vehicles were imported by non-franchise holders.

This means that only 77.7 per cent of the allocated APs in 2004 was actually issued by Miti, she said.

In 2003, franchise holder companies brought in 29,369 units of cars versus 12,379 units imported by non-franchise holders.

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