

Dr M: Miti approved Naza Ria's status

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PUTRAJAYA, Mon. — Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reiterated that it was the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Miti) that approved Naza Ria's national car status, not him.

"I think they (Miti) know that it was they who gave the approval," he said.

He was responding to a report in the *New Sunday Times* titled "Unravelling the APs mystery, questions that have been answered and what remains unsaid".

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, who is also president of Perdana Leadership Foundation (PLF), launched the logo of the Perdana Global Peace Forum 2005, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur in December.

Dr Mahathir stirred the debate on the Approved Permits when he said Proton's sales had been affected because too many APs had been issued.

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Dr Mahathir

He also wanted to know how Naza Ria had been given "national car" status.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz had replied that the approval was given by Dr Mahathir when he was Prime Minister and dismissed any wrongdoing in the giving of APs.

On the Cabinet's decision to give APs to Members of Parliament on March 26, 1997, Dr Mahathir said he knew about the decision.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the explanations given by Rafidah to her peers in Parliament on AP-related matters, Dr Mahathir said "unfortunately, the MPs did

not ask the right questions".

He said the MPs should ask why APs were given only to a few people when there were hundreds of other motor traders and why the declared prices of imported cars were low.

"All these have yet to be answered. It is the duty of Miti to ensure that they check on the correct prices of imported cars. Even though they are not accountable, they have the final say in determining the correct prices," he said.

Rafidah had said Miti was not involved in determining the value of the cars as it was the responsibility of the Customs Department.