

Dr M ups the ante on saga over APs



AWARDED: Dr Mahathir smiling as he is presented the MSA Golden Jubilee Science and Technology Award by Malaysian Science Association president Datuk Dr Soon Ting Kueh as Science, Technology and Innovations Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis looks on yesterday.

KUALA LUMPUR: It would be "interesting" to study the Approved Permit (AP) lists for imported cars for 2003 and 2002 because the numbers then were not as big as those given last year and this year, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I think what happened in 2003 is interesting.

"Were there the same number of APs in 2003. 2002 and all that? That list is not given. But I don't think we should bother about that anymore. The most important thing is the policy on the AP, and the policy of the automotive industry," the former prime minister said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after receiving the *MSA Golden Jubilee Science and Technology Award* from the International Science

Congress yesterday.

A daily had reported that the National Automotive Policy to be unveiled later this month, would see a total overhaul of the AP system.

On why he thought the AP list for 2003 was interesting, Dr Mahathir said: "Well, if I remember - at 80 (years old), one does not remember very well - the numbers in 2003 were not as big as 2004. That is my impression. I may be wrong."

Following Dr Mahathir's calls to the Government to release the AP list, the government released two of them - one for this year, followed by another for last year. These two lists showed that an average of about 67,000 APs were given out for each year.

Asked if he was still calling for the complete release of the APs lists

including the 2003 list, Dr Mahathir said that was for the Government to decide.

"It's not for me to decide. I told myself I should not bother the Government," he said.

On pressure from the Cabinet on International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz to explain the AP issue to the Cabinet, Dr Mahathir said that that was none of his business.

"I am only interested in Proton. Don't ask me about Cabinet. It's no longer my Cabinet," he added.



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