



FOR YOU: Dr Mahathir receiving a painting of him and Datin Paduka Syarifah Mazlina Syed Abdul Kadir, the first Asian woman to ski-sail the Antarctica in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Mahathir: AP issue yet to be resolved

BY ZUHRIN AZAM AHMAD

KUALA LUMPUR: Despite the public disclosure of individuals given Approved Permits (APs) and the minister involved coming under fire, the issue has not been resolved, as far as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is concerned.

On the latest development - the release in Parliament of 337 MPs who obtained APs - the former prime minister and now Proton advisor said it was "nothing".

"That is a policy. MPs are eligible. If they want to import cars that are not sold here for their own use, we give it to them, especially diplomats who want to bring back their cars," he said after delivering a keynote address at a seminar here yesterday.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, in a written reply to Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang on Tuesday, disclosed that the 337 APs were issued to MPs and former MPs between 2000 and Sept 12 this year.

Dr Mahathir said the main concern was the large number of APs given out to bring in foreign models, a move which had adversely

affected the local car industry.

"Our concern is not over the issuance of APs, but the number of APs issued. We are still very much concerned about the volume."

"If the permits are to be given out, then give it to as many people as possible. Don't give 16,000 APs to just one person or 30,000 to two persons, while those who have showrooms do not get any."

Asked if he had met Rafidah over the matter, Dr Mahathir said: "Yeah, we met at Putrajaya."

Rafidah had surprised everyone by going up to Dr Mahathir and hugging him after the National Day parade in Putrajaya.

She later quashed speculation that her public show of affection was an apology for her perceived lack of respect to the elder statesman when she traded barbs with him over the AP issue.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Democratic Party said the Government should not encourage MPs to buy foreign cars by automatically giving them APs.

"MPs should be encouraged to be loyal to the nation and support our national cars," said MDP secretary-general Wee Choo Keong.