

Dr M: Don't cover up issue on Naza cars

BY SIM LEOI LEOI

PUTRAJAYA: There must be no cover-up over who gave the initial approval for Naza cars to be accorded national car status, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking to reporters after launching the Perdana Global Peace Forum here, Dr Mahathir said he did not give the approval (when he was Prime Minister).

"On the approval of Naza cars as national cars, I think Miti (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) knows very well that it had approved it and you know, the cover-up is wrong.

The Government must not cover up and lie to the public, it's wrong. The Government knows that it was Miti that approved it, not me," he said, adding that "any attempt to cover-up is very bad."

"This is especially (important) as we now believe in transparency," he told reporters.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a question on whether he



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was satisfied with the replies given by Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz to MPs over the issuance of Approved Permits (APs) for cars in Parliament last week.

He said based on what he had read in the newspapers, most of the questions raised by the MPs went unanswered.

"And unfortunately, the MPs also did not ask the right ques-

tions," he said.

Some of the unresolved issues, he said, were the number of APs and why these were only given to two or three persons, the reasons for introducing a new category - AP franchise, and the low declared price of cars brought in through APs.

Dr Mahathir denied reports that he allegedly knew nothing about MPs receiving an AP each. (That list was published in Parliament recently)

"I don't remember saying that I didn't know (about it). Somebody said I didn't know. Each MP is given an AP for them to bring in cars not available in the country for their own use, not for business.

"I've told this to the press many times. That doesn't mean they (MPs) are doing something wrong.

"The question is why is it that this list of APs has to be published when the question by the Opposition is for something else. You should answer the question for 'something else' and not about the MPs," he said.