

Dr M: I'm only concerned with APs' effect

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KUALA LUMPUR: Beleaguered Cabinet minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz continues to be battered with calls from politicians for her resignation, with the latest salvo coming from Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang.

But all this baying does not interest Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who brought up the APs (Approved Permits) issue and put Rafidah in a spot.

"I am only concerned with the effect of the APs on the market in Malaysia. That was my

first complaint," said the former prime minister and now Proton adviser.

"Whether or not they want somebody to resign, that is not of interest to me," he told newsmen after launching the Malaysian Physicians for Peace and Social Responsibility society at Universiti Malaya here yesterday.

He was asked to comment on the calls, including from MPs, for Rafidah to quit as International Trade and Industry Minister as she had

failed to explain the APs issue in Parliament.

Lim said Rafidah should resign without any delay if she did not give a comprehensive ministerial statement on the APs controversy in Parliament tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir said the APs issued to the MPs and other people were for them to bring in cars not available locally.

"You can ask for an AP to buy that car but only once in a lifetime," he said, adding that those who had served abroad

were also given APs to bring back the cars they were using. He said these cars were for personal use and did not affect the sale of local cars.

Lim, who is DAP MP for Ipoh Timur, said Rafidah was guilty of trying to arm-twist and intimidate Barisan Nasional MPs from speaking up on the APs issue with her selective and misleading release of the list of APs issued to MPs and former MPs.

"Why didn't Rafidah make public the full list of MPs issued

with APs from 1997 when MPs were first given the entitlement of an AP each?"

"Is it because her name would have appeared on that list, raising a very serious issue of conflict of interests?" he said in a statement yesterday.

If by Wednesday Rafidah still played "hide-and-seek" with Parliament, Lim said the Cabinet should censure her and ask for her resignation.

■ **What next for Rafidah? — Page 22**



Dr Mahathir: 'Whether or not they want somebody to resign, that is not of interest to me'