

APs still under me

Rafidah makes clear who's in charge

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KUALA LUMPUR: "I am still in charge of the APs," Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz declared.

The International Trade and Industry Minister made this point clear yesterday, at her first official function since the new Cabinet line-up was announced

on Tuesday.

Despite the committee set up in the Prime Minister's Department and chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to look into AP-related issues, Rafidah said matters relating to the issuance of approved permits for car imports were fully under the jurisdiction of her ministry.

Only when problems arose would the committee be involved, she said.

"The committee, of which I am also a member, will handle problems like vehicles being stuck at ports," she told newsmen after announcing the performance of the manufacturing and related services sectors last year.

> TURN TO PAGE 3



Rafidah: PM's opinion matters more

> FROM PAGE 1

"This is the kind of matters that the committee will deal with, things that are related to the Customs Department and which have nothing to do with the ministry.

"It does only that. Administrative matters concerning APs are still under Miti."

The function at the Mida headquarters saw a huge turnout of pressmen who were

more interested in her thoughts on being retained as a Cabinet minister by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi than in the economic figures she had to announce.

Clad in a red *baju kurung*, the veteran politician, dubbed the "Iron Lady", was in a jovial mood, humouring journalists with lengthy, elaborate replies.

Rafidah, who came under fire from various quarters last year over how a large number of APs

was given to a handful of individuals, said her critics should read the reason for Abdullah's decision on her post.

She said she was flattered to hear that the Prime Minister believed the country needed her experience.

"To me, the opinion of the person who decides my position is more important than that of my critics. I am flattered by his opinion of me," she said, flashing a broad smile.