

Rafidah: I have nothing to say

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz was today hounded from pillar to post by the media who wanted to get her reaction to remarks by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

From Putrajaya, where she attended the weekly Cabinet meeting, to her office in Jalan Duta, reporters were waiting to get her comment, but the Minister remained tight-lipped.

Journalists who had been waiting outside her ministry from noon, received news at 1pm that she had left Putrajaya. However, a ministry of-

ficial told the Press that Rafidah would not be returning to her office.

"You might as well go back. Datuk Seri is not coming back here today," said the official.

Twenty minutes later, Rafidah showed up in her Lexus four-wheel-drive and rushed in before reporters could get to her.

The doors to the ministry were locked by security guards until she had entered the lift.

Journalists continued to stay outside, near her parked vehicle, despite attempts by security guards to chase them away.

When Rafidah emerged at 5.50pm,

she flashed a smile to the waiting Press.

"I have nothing to say today," she said, before getting into her car.

The Press had been hoping to get Rafidah's reaction to remarks made yesterday by Dr Mahathir that he had directed a minister to investigate the landed price of completely-built-up (CBU) cars, which he said was too low.

He had said the low landed price for cars brought in from South Korea and China was only RM11,000.

Dr Mahathir had said that the minister had not made any attempt to investigate the price of the vehicles although he had directed the min-

ister to do so during his tenure as Prime Minister.

Although he he did not name the minister in question, it appeared that he was talking about Rafidah.

Dr Mahathir, who is now the adviser for Proton, had said the low price of these vehicles was one of the factors which undermined sales of Proton cars. Another factor Dr Mahathir cited was the 67,000 Approved Permits (APs) issued last year.

He had said that of the number, 12,600 were given to 82 companies while the remaining 54,400 were given to just 20 companies, allowing them to make millions of ringgit.