

Headline
Date
Media Title
Section
Circulation
Readership

Mercs for use by state's guests only, says PM

26. Jul 2008

New Straits Times

Local News

158042

512000

Language ENGLISH

Page No 1,6

Article Size 658 cm2

Frequency Daily

Color Full Color

AdValue 10849.36



PERDANA FIRST

STATES MUST CONTINUE TO USE PROTON AS OFFICIAL CAR

■ Terengganu gets to keep the 14 Mercedes Benzes...

■ But **NOT** for the use of state executive councillors...

FOR VVIP USE ONLY

TO sell the Mercedes Benzes now would only result in a loss. Terengganu can keep them but they must be used only for state guests or dignitaries and not by the councillors or other officers...

IT is for the ACA to investigate if there are elements of corruption in the high maintenance cost of the Perdana cars. We should leave it to them...

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

FORMER MENTERI BESAR THREATENS LEGAL ACTION

>> REPORTS: P6

Mercs for use by state's guests only, says PM

Headline **Meres for use by state's guests only, says PM**
Date **26. Jul 2008**
Media Title **New Straits Times**

■ **By Hamidah Atan**
news@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: The 14 Mercedes Benzes purchased by the Terengganu government are to be used only for its guests.

The decision was conveyed to Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Ahmad Said in his meeting with Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Datuk Seri Najib Razak after the Umno supreme council meeting on Thursday.

The prime minister said he and Najib met Ahmad and discussed the purchase of the cars which Ahmad had said would be used as state official cars.

"I wish to state here that this is an important decision by the cabinet, that the state government must not use the cars for its state executive councillors or any officers entitled to use official cars. This is what we have decided upon," he said.

"Since the cars have been bought and to sell them would only result in a loss, all of them must be used for state guests or dignitaries.

"This is the decision, nothing more, nothing less," he told a press conference after giving away the 2007 National Academic Awards at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday.

The Proton Perdana will, therefore, remain as the official vehicles for the state's officers.

Tan Sri Professor Emeritus Syed



Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Ahmad Said clarifying the issue over the state's purchase of the Mercedes Benz cars to reporters in Seri Iman, Kuala Terengganu yesterday.

Jalaludin Syed Salim, who is Halal Industry Development Corporation chairman and Universiti Putra Malaysia board of directors' chairman, won the "Tokoh Akademik Negara" award.

Universiti Malaya's Professor Onn Hashim and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Associate Prof Nordin Hussin won the Journal and Book Publications awards respectively.

The Product Commercialisation and Innovation and Creativity and Arts awards went to UPM's Associate Prof Dr Syed Omar Syed Rastan and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris's Associate Prof Zulkifli Yusoff respectively.

Also present were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin and university vice-chancellors.

Ahmad, in defending the purchase of the cars, had said all the menteri besar in other states knew that the official Proton Perdana V6 Executive cars were faulty, but did not want to admit it.

"I am not a hypocrite, I am telling the truth. I am being transparent here. Proton should see this in a positive light and improve itself. I have to think of how to save the rakyat's money. Ask any engineer around and they will tell you that the Mercedes E200 Kompressors are more economical in the long run," he had said before chairing the weekly state exco meeting at a five-star hotel here recently.

Ahmad sparked an outcry last week with the revelation of the state's RM3.43 million expenditure on the Mercedes cars as a "cost-cutting measure".

He had also claimed the state government had spent RM1.15 million to maintain its fleet of 16 Perdanas since they were purchased in 2004.

Abdullah was also asked on the Anti-Corruption Agency investigation into the high maintenance and service cost of the Perdana Executive cars.

"It is left to the ACA to investigate if there are elements of corruption. They know their jobs well and we should leave it to them."

ACA officers had taken files and recorded statements from four drivers in their investigation into the high maintenance costs of the Perdana Executive cars.