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LEAD PROTON

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(P)

car project

SHAH ALAM, JULY 9 (BERNAMA)-- AMIDST A DRIZZLE, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD LAUNCHED THE FIRST MODEL OF THE MALAYSIAN CAR -- THE PROTON SAGA -- HERE THIS MORNING.

ABOUT 1,000 PEOPLE, INCLUDING DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH, CABINET MINISTERS, SELANGOR MENTERI BESAR DATUK AHMAD RAZALI ALI, DIPLOMATS AND OTHER DIGNITARIES WITNESSED THE HOUR-LONG CEREMONY.

THE CEREMONY BEGAN AT 9.30 AM, HALF AN HOUR LATER THAN SCHEDULED, BECAUSE OF THE HEAVY RAIN EARLIER IN THE DAY WHICH CAUSED TRAFFIC JAMS.

EARLIER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR PLANTED A SAGA TREE AT THE FACTORY SITE.

AND AT EXACTLY 10.30 AM, THE PRIME MINISTER PRESSED A BUTTON TO ROLL OUT A BLUE, FOUR-DOOR SEDAN. --MORE

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LEAD PROTON 2 SHAH ALAM

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR THEN DROVE AROUND IN THE PROTON SAGA WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF HICOM (HEAVY INDUSTRIES CORPORATION OF MALAYSIA) TAN SRI JAMIL MOHAMED JAN.

DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH AND DATUK HAJI AHMAD RAZALI ALSO TOOK TURNS TO DRIVE AROUND IN A METALLIC GREEN PROTON.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE PROTON SAGA WOULD BE THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG.

TEN PROTONS WERE LATER PUT ON DISPLAY FOR THE GUESTS.

THEIR COMMENTS AFTER EXAMINING THE CARS INCLUDED +STYLISH AND GOOD+, +CAN IT FIT A TALL MAN?+, AND +AS A MALAYSIAN CAR IT SHOULD BE CHEAPER, AROUND \$15,000.+

EDARAN OTOMOBIL NASIONAL (EON) ALSO SET UP A SPECIAL BOOTH AT THE PLANT TODAY TO FACILTATE BOOKINGS FOR THE CAR WHICH WOULD COMMERCIALY LAUNCHED IN SEPTEMBER.--BERNAMA.

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