

Dr M: Dealers can sell the Saga provided . . .

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Motor vehicle dealers who wish to sell the Proton Saga can do so provided they switch their present sales in the 1.3 and 1.5cc range to the Saga, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed said today.

The Saga comes in the 1.3 and 1.5cc versions.

Edaran Otomobil Nasional (EON) the distributor for the car had announced that traders would be given the opportunity to sell the Saga.

Dr Mahathir said that dealers could continue to distribute cars which did not compete with the Saga.

He assured the Malaysian Motor Traders Association at its annual dance and dinner at a hotel here tonight that the national car project was not planned to put the brakes on existing businesses of dealers here.

"The project is designed to boost the utilisation of locally made components and to facilitate the transfer of technology.

"The country will derive various spinoff benefits and linkages to the domestic economy," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the Government would work to solve any problems dealers

may face with the launching of the Saga.

"The fact that the Finance Ministry had agreed to pre-budget dialogues with the association illustrates the Government's concern," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that to keep pace with present day needs and competition dealers would have to diversify and be adaptable.

He urged local car distributors to branch into the manufacture of car components.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that such ventures must be taken one step at a time.

"We need to produce quality components at a reasonable cost to keep down the cost of the Saga," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the Government had identified components planned for production locally for the Saga under the "local content programme" which was the main objective of the national car project.

It has been speculated that the price of the Saga would be between \$17,800 and \$20,200 (exclusive of road tax, etc).