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He said Malaysia would be respected and earn revenue if the project succeeded.

"If it fails, we will lose a lot. The world will also laugh at us."

He urged Malaysians not to belittle the project or cause its failure.

They should instead be proud of it and the country's ability to produce its own car, he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government's decision to venture into the automobile industry was made after careful study and consideration.

He stressed that the Saga prices were reasonable and competitive not because the cars were of inferior quality but because the Government wanted as many Malaysians as possible to own them.

"I must admit that a large section of the national car is manufactured overseas but what is important is that we have made a start and we can succeed if we proceed cautiously."

He said EON had set up its branches throughout the country and hoped it would meet demand efficiently.

"EON must carefully plan its back-up services and should ensure that spare parts for the national car are easily available."

Dr Mahathir said the national car project started with a small step and was proceeding cautiously. Despite the caution, mistakes may still be made, he said.

"The critics will wait for this to happen but we must not be disappointed. We should bear in mind that no industry in the world has not made mistakes," he added.

Dr Mahathir said Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional (Proton) was not set up to merely produce the Saga but also to enhance the dignity of the nation and its people.

"The car reflects the people's dignity and their ability to face challenges. It also shows their resilience and their strength to overcome obstacles successfully."

He said the national car would not have become a reality if the Government had heeded comments from critics.

"In fact, there would not be rubber, oil palm and cocoa estates or a petroleum industry in Malaysia if we had listened to critics."

The critics had predicted that these industries

# Saga sale is on — and PM buys the first

S - 2 SEP 1985

By K.T. ARASU

SHAH ALAM, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad bought the first Proton Saga at a colourful ceremony at the Edaran Otomobil Nasional Sdn Bhd (EON) office here today.

"Like all good husbands, Dr Mahathir has bought the car for his wife," quipped compere Faridah Merican when the Prime Minister handed a cheque for \$20,075 to EON chairman Tan Sri Jamil Jan.

Dr Mahathir had given a giant cheque, and in return received a giant receipt from Tan Sri Jamil.

The purchase was the highlight of the ceremony watched by about 4,000 people.

Dr Mahathir had arrived at the EON office to the scene of 200 Proton Sagas lining both sides of

the road.

He was then greeted by more than 200 people representing Rebana Ubi groups, Bunga Mangga teams, three lion dance troupes, Indian musicians and dancers.

Dr Mahathir, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam and other dignitaries were then entertained to songs by a choir.

Afterwards, Dr Mahathir launched the sale of the national car and declared open the EON office and its 20 branches.

The public were then treated to a Saga musical extravaganza, led by artiste Sudirman.

During the launching, which was telecast live over RTM, Dr Mahathir urged Malaysians to ensure that the national car project was a success to prove wrong its critics.

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