

# PROTON — A SYMBOL OF OUR DIGNITY



# It's more than just a car: PM

*Mahathir - His Car Project*

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SHAH ALAM, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Malaysians to take pride in the Proton Saga as the national car project was another step towards enhancing the nation in the eyes of the world.

The Prime Minister said: "The Saga is more than just a quality automobile. It is a symbol of Malaysians as a dignified people.

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**By NORHAWA YUNUS**

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"It also reflects that we are a nation ready and able to face all challenges and with the will to succeed."

Efforts to set up the national automobile industry should not be belittled.

"Do not purposely try to make the national car project a failure," he said.

He was speaking at the official market launch of the Proton Saga and the opening of the Edaran Otomobil Nasional Sdn Bhd (EON) headquarters and branches.

Also present was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam. The occasion was carried "live" by RTM.

Dr Mahathir, who was earlier dubbed "Bapa Proton Saga" by EON's managing director Datuk Eric Chia, said the national car project "may not be a big step, but it is indeed a significant one. All efforts undertaken by man must start with the first step. Although the first step may be small the potential to expand is enormous".

He urged the people to have faith in their own ability to make the project work.

There are certain quarters who are quick to hurl criticisms at the heavy industry projects embarked by the Government.

He admitted, however, that the Government could not do as it pleased.

But it was not proper for these critics to assume that all the planning was prompted by what he termed "angan-angan Mat Jenin" (building castles in the air).

The Government decided to enter the automobile industry after considering in detail all the factors.

*"We are not running before we can walk. We begin with a small step and then we tread the path cautiously. Even then, we may make mistakes. And those professional critics will say: Look, I told you so."*

If this happened, the Prime Minister said the people must not be disappointed and disheartened but to remember that "every industry makes mistakes".

On the heavy industry projects, Dr Mahathir said such projects were not synonymous with the Heavy Industry Corporation of Malaysia (Hicom) or other big industries, as