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SECOND NATIONAL CAR PROJECT TO BE LAUNCHED NEXT MONTH

Maha thir-car

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91 (P)
SUBANG Dec 29 (Bernama) -- The Daihatsu Motor Co of Japan and a local company will embark on the second national car project next month, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that the government would first have to decide on 'several issues, including the pricing for the car, raised by the company.

The prime Minister said that the government wanted the car to be sold at a competitive price and to be affordable by the people.

However, the car producer had to bear a rather high production cost because the second national car would not be produced on 'a large scale as the Porotn Saga, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told a press conference at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on his return here from a working visit to Japan and South Korea that Daihatsu Motor Co had raised the issues during his discussion with officials of the company in Tokyo recently.

He said that the government had to make a quick decision on the issues raised to enable the project to be implemented as soon as possible.

The Prime Minister announced recently that the second car project to produce cars under 1,000 cc would be implemented on a joint-venture basis between Daihatsu Motor Co and Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB). -- more /

♥29/12/21-33MST

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in Tokyo, the Prime Minister also held discussions with officials of other Japanese companies including Tokyo Gas, Mitsubishi and Mitsui.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was also granted an audience by Emperor Akhito and met Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone.

In Seoul, he met President Roh Tae-Woo.

The prime Minister said that in his meeting with Encik Miyazawa and Encik Roh, the question of the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) was not raised as the purpose of the visit to both countries was not to lobby for support for the EAEC.

The purpose of the visit to Japan was to officially open the Malaysian embassy building in Tokyo and the purpose of the visit to South Korea was to launch the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation's (MISC) biggest container vessel, Bunga Pelangi, in Ulsan.

Asked on the withdrawal of the publication permit against the +Mingguan Waktu+ tabloid, he said that the government had to resort to such action because it failed to adhere to the conditions imposed for the issuance of the permit. -- more

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Besides, the tabloid merely played up reports that were of no benefit to the country, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir denied that the permit was withdrawn because its reports were critical of the government.

+Many other newspapers are critical of the government but the government did not withdraw their permit,+ he said.

He said: +The press should play a role to develop the country and not merely bent on discrediting people . . . if that is what is being practised, then it is better that it does not exist.+ "

He said that he had not read the maiden issue of the tabloid but had been informed by the Home Ministry that its permit had to be withdrawn because of its failure to adhere to the conditions for its issuance.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said that he had a brief meeting with Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport this evening when he was on transit there.

But he said it was a courtesy call just like that made by state Umno leaders and government officials at the airport's VIP room. -- Bernama

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