

CNS5028

U GE 21-05 00177 EG604

aae tbe

Mahathir-Wira

MAHATHIR LAUNCHES PROTON WIRA

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, May 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister <sup>197</sup> Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight launched the Proton Wira - the new model of the national car

- and said the success silenced negative assumptions on the capacity of Malaysians to accept changes in high-tech skills.

He said the new model was the result of research, design and effort of the Malaysian people.

"More than that, the capacity of the Proton plant and its machinery to produce cars today is also the result of the efforts of local engineers and workers.

"Towards this end, part of the government's objective to upgrade the local engineering capacity including production engineering has been achieved," he said at the launching of the new model at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The prime minister said Proton (Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional) should upgrade research and development to ensure that the national car remained competitive in the international market. -- more

NAK MGN

▼21/05/21-27MST

CNS5038

U GE 21-05 00152 EF120

aae tbe

Mahathir - Wira 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said Proton should be able to make cosmetic changes to models of the national car and also have the capacity to come up with completely new models to satisfy buyers whose tastes changed often.

He said the 400,000 Proton cars in the country provided another opening for a vital industry -- reconditioning old cars.

Such reconditioned cars would not only have good quality but the potential for export if the price was reasonable, he said.

Such used cars should be reconditioned well so that they did not cause accidents, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said Proton's success in penetrating the car market in many countries and its winning of six gold awards at international shows had led even more countries to import the Malaysian-built car. -- more

NAK AAM

▼21/05/21-47MST

CNS5043

U GE 21-05 00154 EF121

aae tbe

Mahathir - Wira 3 Kuala Lumpur

The Government hoped that with the launching of Proton Wira, efforts would be intensified to find new markets.

Proton should increase its production capacity, venture into new markets and come up with left-hand drive cars, he said.

There was a wide market for left-hand drive cars in several countries, he noted and expressed the hope that Proton would target these markets.

The Prime Minister also hoped that Proton would give its serious attention to the export field as this would not only help increase its production volume but also create economies of scale and accelerate the growth of ancillary industries.

Then Malaysia could emerge as the supplier of automobile component parts to other countries, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the success of a business depended on after sale services. -- more

NAK AAM

▼21/05/21-58MST

CNS5054

U GE 21-05 00151 EF122

aae tbe

Mahathir - Wira 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

He said consumers' confidence in a particular product was usually governed by the ability of distributors or sales people to provide good maintenance service, advice, guidance and whether the product sold itself was good or otherwise.

He said such services were vital for the car industry and suggested that Edaran Otomobil Nasional (EON) provide good after sales service to ensure that Proton continued to have a place in the local market.

He said the Proton plant production capacity which had been increased to 120,000 units a year from 80,000 units should be further enhanced in view of the interest shown by many countries which had yet to import the Malaysian-built car.

He said Malaysia could take just pride in the Proton Wira which was yet another Malaysian success. -- Bernama

NAK AAM

▼21/05/22-16MST