

# Thais may make Proton

① Dr. M-oversea trips

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BANGKOK: Proton cars fitted with some Thai components may be produced in Thailand for sale in its domestic market, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said Thailand had agreed to allow the sale of Proton cars in the local market subject to the normal duties imposed on imported completely-built-up cars.

However, tariffs on imported CBUs are high and Malaysia is looking into the possibility of assembling them locally to remain competitive.

"The Protons will be fitted with some Thai components so that they will not be too Malaysian. It will be a Malaysian car with Thai components," he told a news conference after winding up a three-day visit here.

Dr Mahathir arrived here on Thursday with a 40-member delegation to promote closer economic co-operation between the two countries.

He held talks with Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and was granted

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## PM: Great scope in growth triangle concept

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an audience by King Bhumipol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit at Dusit Palace.

Dr Mahathir also attended a briefing by the National Economic and Social Development Board and addressed the Joint Standing Committee of Commerce, Industry and Banking of Thailand.

On Friday, he visited three factories producing automobile components, dies and moulds, including the Thai International Die-Making Company Ltd which exported die compo-

nents for the Proton Saga and Wira in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and Thailand had agreed in principle to co-operate in the manufacture of automobile components, including the possibility of producing components for the Proton and other cars.

"We also discussed the export of Malaysian automobile components for the Thai market," he added.

On the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, Dr Mahathir felt there was a great scope in the concept, such as the shifting of certain industries to countries which

had special comparative advantages.

For example, Indonesia had the advantage of more workers and cheap wages for the siting of labour-intensive industries.

The tourism infrastructure like transportation links could also be developed, for easy access for tourists within the region, such as from Phuket to Langkawi and Medan.

Dr Mahathir admitted there were some minor disputes on border demarcation but these could be resolved through checking of documents to determine the basis for demarcating the border.