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A FULL-FLEDGED MALAYSIAN CAR IN 10 to 15 YEARS, SAYS PM

RAWANG, Aug 1<sup>94</sup> (Bernama) -- Malaysia may take another 10 to 15 years to make a full-fledged Malaysian car, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking to reporters after opening the Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) manufacturing plant here today, he said Malaysia had learnt much quicker in car-making.

"Maybe, it will take another 10 to 15 years to learn enough about the technology in engine making and the transmission," he said.

"Most countries take about 50 to 60 years to learn how to make their own cars and here Malaysia have learned much quicker."

Dr Mahathir said Perodua, the second national car maker after Proton, would have to learn all the different stages of car making, from the design to total production.

He said Malaysia would have to go into the export of cars in view of the rather small domestic market.

"Many countries which produce cars for the domestic market also had to look at exports of about 40 percent," he added.

"For Malaysia, it will be better if the export element could be more than the domestic market."

Dr Mahathir said the Kancil, the 660-cc car produced by Perodua, would be exported as soon as possible.

However, he said the Kancil might not easily penetrate markets such as Europe due to the small capacity of the engine and the high emission standard in Europe.

In his opening address, Dr Mahathir said Perodua should not confine the sourcing of technology to one source only but to look at other appropriate sources in the world.

"Technology transfer can only be achieved and prove meaningful when Malaysia is able to design and produce a full-fledged Malaysian car," he said.

He added that the increased usage of local content would improve Malaysia's car engineering expertise and ensure that money did not flow out of the country.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was still far from achieving its objective of designing, developing and producing a car for the domestic and export markets.

"Although we are able to produce components to produce the car itself, we are still at an early stage in designing and developing the car on our own," he added. -- Bernama