

# Duty on rally car parts may be cut

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**By Jeffrey Ramayah**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Government will study the possibility of reducing the duties on components and equipment used for modifying cars for rallies, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that if the proposal was accepted, it would contribute to the advancement of technological and engineering skills among Malaysians.

He said that as ordinary cars could not be used for rallies, those in the automobile industry had to make modifications.

"And those producing such units have to upgrade their engineering skills as they have to modify the safety features and transmission system, and sometimes completely change the engines," he told reporters after watching the special stage of the Petronas Rally of Malaysia 1994 at Tasik Perdana.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir flagged off the 45 competing

cars in front of Bangunan Sultan Samad for the first stage of the rally.

He said rally car engines must be durable to withstand the rough and tumble of the sport.

When asked whether there was a possibility that the tax reduction would be included in the 1995 Budget proposals which will be tabled in Parliament at the end of October, Dr Mahathir said it came under the jurisdiction of the Finance Ministry.

He said Edaran Otomobil Nasional (EON) had a division which was responsible for converting Proton models into rally cars.

"These have been certified as suitable for rallies," he said, adding that EON had the capability to undertake modifications to make cars suitable for the sport.

Proton cars had won in rallies in Thailand and the Middle East, he said, adding that this was proof that the national car was a success.

He said the conversion of cars into rally units would help Malaysians improve their knowledge in engi-

neering technology.

The three-leg Petronas rally covers 993km. Leading names competing include 555 Subaru World Rally team's Possum Bourne (New Zealand), Richard Burns (Britain) and Team Mitsubishi Ralliart's Kenneth Eriksson (Sweden) and five-time Rally of Malaysia champion Ross Dunkerton (Australia).

The local challenge is headed by Petronas-EON Racing Team (PERT). Two-time winner Gregg Carr (Australia) leads the charge in his Proton Wira while local favourite Karamjit Singh will be making his second appearance behind the wheel of a Proton Wira 4WD Turbo.

The first-leg today will take the drivers through the rough and rugged terrain of estates from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Selangor.

The second-leg tomorrow will see them going through the Kuala Lumpur-Nilai-Sepang-Port Dickson route while the third-leg will be the Kuala Lumpur-Kuala Selangor route.