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Mahathir-Bus

MAHATHIR TURNS BUS DRIVER IN TOKYO

By: Tham Choy Lin

TOKYO, May 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tucked himself behind the wheel of a large coach and drove expertly around the test course of the Isuzu Motors Ltd truck manufacturing plant near here today.

And the Malaysian Prime Minister did not stop at that.

After deftly parking the 57-seater coach, he climbed into a 25-tonne trailer for another spin around the sloping and curving 3km track with Hicom Holdings Bhd president Datuk Yahaya Ahmad acting as the "attendant".

"I think I can qualify as a bus driver," pronounced the Prime Minister when he returned grinning after testing a third vehicle, a utility wagon.

A Malaysian official, who was on the bus, said the Prime Minister was hitting 90 km per hour.

He halted all three vehicles back at the same spots where they were parked in a line of 19 of Isuzu's latest range of commercial vehicles that were paraded for his inspection at the Fujisawa plant south of here.

His steering skills drew loud applause from the Japanese workers and other Malaysians present including reporters.

"This is not automatic, he has to use the gears," said an Isuzu staff pointing to the 19,001 cc bus.

Unfortunately, Malaysians back home will not be able to witness the episode because the RTM and TV3 crews were not allowed to record that part of the visit due to the latest designs on display.

Dr Mahathir, who began a six-day working trip here on Monday, was touring the plant where he also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding for Malaysia's first national truck project between Isuzu, Hicom and sister company Diversified Resources Bhd. -- BERNAMA

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