

12 NOV 1998

Mahathir-Proton

DR M SAYS M'SIA HAS ATTAINED HIGH ENGINEERING STANDARDS IN CAR-MAKING

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today paid tribute to the high standard of engineering achieved by the national car manufacturer, Proton.

This achievement had enabled Malaysians to attain competence in other engineering fields alike, he said at the launch of the new 2.0 Proton Perdana V6 and Satria GTi 1.8 here.

He expressed the hope that Malaysia's engineering capability could improve to the same level of developed countries.

Since the launch of the first Proton car in 1985, he said Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton) had made much headway not only in production but also in coming up with its own designs and bodywork.

In the early stages, Proton could only produce 13 per cent of local components but with the high commitment of its suppliers and vendors, local content had now almost reached 100 per cent.

Dr Mahathir hoped Malaysians would help Proton by buying the national car.

"Proton is a Malaysian company," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government was aware that the people were hardpressed by the economic downturn and this had led to poor car sales.

Hence, the government had eased conditions for car loans to facilitate purchases.

In line with the policy to trim down imports and to buy locally-made products, he said the government had also encouraged the people to "Buy Malaysian".

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were a disciplined lot and knew their responsibilities.

"We will succeed if try hard enough," he added. -- BERNAMA

SHO TS