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MAHATHIR-ECONOMY

LAUNCH OF KEMBARA SHOWS ECONOMY NOT AS BAD, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the launch the Perodua Kembara, the first locally made four-wheel drive, proves that Malaysia's economy is not as bad as proclaimed by foreigners.

Speaking at the launching of the national four-wheel drive, he said the confirmed booking of 475 units of Kembara shows that Malaysians' "still have two or three ringgit to spend on new cars."

Against this scenario, he said foreigners feel that there must be something wrong with our perception of the economic downturn.

They said Malaysia is doing all the wrong things against the advice of foreign journalists "who seem to know much more in running countries, better than any government in the world."

He also criticised "foreign journalists who strangely remain journalists and not ministers of any country."

He said the world is of the opinion that Malaysia's economy was in bad shape and close to collapse and needed the help of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Strangely, we launch a new car," he said to the loud applause of the more than 1,000 guests who attended the launching.

The Prime Minister also expressed confidence that Kembara would be well-received by the public as the vehicle would be the cheapest four-wheel drive in its category.

He said Kembara was aerodynamic in shape and could be well-received compared with the "boxy" look of other four-wheel drives.

For a developing country, Malaysia can take pride in introducing the Kembara during these trying times.

He also said Perodua would be able to export the Kembara overseas in the future.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said that he had tested a 850 cc Kancil direct fuel injection and was surprised that it could really accelerate but did not say whether the car would go into mass production.

With its reasonable prices, Malaysians could buy more Kancils, maybe at the expense of the Proton," he said in jest.--BERNAMA

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