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Preferential treatment for overseas Kenari buyers

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IN June this year, I proudly ordered the Kenari Gxi. The list price was RM38,455.

When on June 14, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched this latest addition to the growing list of Malaysian cars, I was justifiably happy.

My happiness, though, was marred by a small matter of an increase of RM1,267 -the list price was now RM39,722 without so much as a "by your leave" to those of us who had signed up earlier. The reason was that the car now had sports rims fitted to it.

I didn't want to quibble and joined the many who paid more for the privilege of having sports rims.

But the very same people who were honing the looks of the car seemed to have fallen down on the safety aspect.

My new Kenari did not have safety belts for the back seats. I decided to have them fitted myself. The cost of a set of belts, I was informed, was only RM188.

I thought that this was a small price to pay to ensure the safety of my loved ones, especially since they would now be travelling in a car fitted with sports rims.

The next shocker came when I was told that the Kenari was not suited to the fitting of the back-seat safety belts.

Modifications would cost me another RM1,000 or more.

All the above I faced with my usual equanimity. The final stinker, though, was learning that the export model of the same Kenari came fitted with standard back-seat belts.

This is an unnecessary egg in the face of local buyers who have supported the growth of Perodua. Why do we not get the same fittings as the foreign buyers? Why isn't our safety of equal importance? And does Perodua give two hoots for the Government's road safety drive?

Or is it a case of kera di hutan disusukan, anak sendiri mati kelaparan?