

Made-in-Malaysia car engine in production soon

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By **Seema Viswanathan**

SHAH ALAM, Thurs: The Made-in-Malaysia car engine is expected to go into commercial production soon, after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave it the thumbs-up today.

After testing the 1.6 litre engine at the Proton plant here, he said the engine is as "good and powerful, especially for a 1.6 litre engine".

"Proton has come a long way since its launch in 1985. There was a time when almost 80% of the cars were foreign made," he said.

"But now, the time has come when Malaysia can produce its own engine."

Mahathir did not disclose further details of the new engine or when it will be commercially produced.

Earlier, the prime minister told Proton factory workers that

Proton will not be sold to foreign parties.

He later told reporters that if necessary, only a part of it will be sold and that only to "technology partners".

"At the moment, if we can resist, we won't sell. But if we have to do it, it won't be 100%," he said. "They (the new partner) must be a technology partner."

Asked whether Proton-owned Lotus is seeking to re-enter the Formula One racing scene through a tie-up with team Minardi, he said: "Of course, in future, we want the world to see a Malaysian engine and driver (in Formula One), but that is a long way off."

Proton will roll out its 1.8 litre of version of the Waja model in the first quarter of next year, a Proton statement said.

A total of 39,300 units of Proton Waja have been delivered to customers, and the 40,000th car was rolled out today in conjunction with Mahathir's visit.