

'No plan to appoint finance minister just yet'

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SHAH ALAM: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there is no plan to appoint a new finance minister for the time being as he is capable of shouldering the responsibility.

The Prime Minister said he was comfortable with carrying out the duties, adding that such talks were mere speculation.

"I suspect that the press fraternity does not trust me as the finance minister.

"They keep asking when we are going to appoint a new person (to the post)," he told reporters after visiting Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd's (Proton) medium volume factory which produces the *Waja* model in Shah Alam yesterday.

He described the market talk on the appointment of a new finance minister as similar to the reports that Pahang Tengku Mahkota Tengku Abdullah had bought a £70mil (RM378mil) mansion in Britain.

Asked when a new finance minister would be appointed to replace him, Dr Mahathir said: "It could be in a month, two months, three months, a year or when I feel like it."

Dr Mahathir said he was able to handle the job as the finance minister as he was helped by many assistants.

At the ceremony yesterday, Dr Mahathir also saw the rolling out of the 40,000th *Waja* car.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should be proud of the performance of Proton which had achieved success in 16 years since its inception.

He said Proton started out making cars with 80% foreign contents but have reached a stage where it could design, test and produce cars almost entirely on its own.