

# PM: Govt not keen to sell Proton stake to foreigners

STAR - 6 JUL 2001  
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THE government will hold off, for as long as possible, selling its stake in Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton) to foreign carmakers, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"At the moment, if we can, we will resist (selling a stake in Proton to) foreign partners. But if we have to, it would not be a 100% sell-out although we want to have good technology partners," Dr Mahathir told reporters after visiting Proton's medium volume factory in Shah Alam yesterday.

The plant produces Proton's latest *Waja* model.

Dr Mahathir said Proton had acquired the necessary technology to make its presence felt in international markets and should take steps to avoid being taken over by other major foreign car manufacturers.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir commended the Proton staff for their commitment to the national car project and witnessed the roll-out of the 40,000th *Waja* from the plant.

He also mentioned the possibili-

ty of reviving the Proton City project in Tanjung Malim, Perak, if the production facilities in Shah Alam could not cope with increased demands in the future.

Proton chief executive officer Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Ariff said Proton had reduced its component costs by 11.3% since he took over the helm four years ago.

The medium volume factory in Shah Alam was built at a cost of RM400mil and has a production capacity of 5,000 units of the *Waja* a month.