

PM laments misuse of APs

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GURUN: Many bumiputra businessmen given approved permits (APs) to import foreign cars would have become successful today if they had not misused the Government's help, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Instead of selling cars, they became salesmen of APs, the Prime Minister lamented.

"After selling the APs, they would ask the Government for more," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that, very frequently, they would also drag in non-bumiputra partners who would manage the business.

The bumiputras themselves would behave like *towkays* and did not know what was going on at all in their business, he said at the groundbreaking ceremony of Naza Automotive Manufacturing Sdn Bhd manufacturing and assembly plant here.

"If they have made proper use of the APs, some of them would today have become as big as Naza Kia," he said, adding that because of their attitude the goals of the New

Economic Policy had yet to be achieved.

Present were Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, Naza Kia Sdn Bhd chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Ismail, Naza Kia Sdn Bhd managing director Tan Sri S.M. Nasimuddin SM Amin and Kia Motors Corporation (Asia and Pacific) president Y.S. Koh.

Dr Mahathir also said that corrupt state officials were scaring away foreign investors.

Many investors wanted to come to Malaysia to invest but because of corrupt state officials, they went elsewhere, he said.

"Some of them (officials) would ask for free shares and bribes, driving foreign investors away," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia would study how South Korea managed its economy and paid of its debts.

"South Korea has made an amazing turnaround. We are seeing its products everywhere. It can even compete with Japan now," he added.