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Dr M takes a drive down memory lane with Pontiac

SEPANG, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had a pleasant surprise here today when he was presented with a 1959 Pontiac Catalina, the same model which he owned in Alor Star decades ago.

The registration number of the 6.3 litre V8 Pontiac was K7600, the very same number that Dr Mahathir used for his Pontiac.

"I owned my Pontiac before I became a Member of Parliament. I was in private practice then," said Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir was running the Maha Clinic then.

"It was cheap those days. I bought my car then for only RM12,000. It is a guzzler of petrol - it gives only about 14 miles per gallon". The blue colour left-hand drive American sedan, in immaculate condition, was presented to him by Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad chairman Tan Sri Basir Ismail after Dr Mahathir presented prizes to the winners of the 2002 Merdeka Millennium Endurance race at the Sepang International Circuit here.

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali who were about to leave home after the prize presentation was caught off-guard when Basir gestured Dr Mahathir towards the Pontiac which was parked outside the racing track.

Dr Mahathir took the Pontiac for a spin with Dr Siti Hasmah next to him.

"I'm happy, for sentimental reasons," he said after the spin.