

PM launches first national multi-purpose vehicle

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Prime Minister launched the country's first national multi-purpose vehicle (MPV), the Naza Ria, at a glittering ceremony here yesterday.

The MPV, priced at RM98,888, is a seven-seater and powered by a 2.5litre V6 engine.

Accompanying Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali at the Malaysian International Exhibition and Conference Centre at the Mines Resort City were Naza Group of Companies managing director Tan Sri S.M. Nasimuddin S.M. Amin and its chairman Tan Sri Ismail Abdul Aziz.

Nasimuddin later presented a Naza Ria to Dr Siti Hasmah, who received it on behalf of Bakti

(Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers).

The Naza Ria has a luxurious, roomy interior and is packed with safety features, including an energy-absorbing steering column, driver's airbag and child-proof safety locks.

It comes in five metallic colours - celtic silver, luxury gold, chrome silver, metallic black and sapphire.

The price includes a one-year comprehensive insurance coverage and road tax and a two-year or 50,000km warranty (whichever comes first).

In his speech, Dr Mahathir urged local car manufacturers to keep up with current trends in engine development and design.

He said research and devel-

opment should be the main factor in their operations to enable them to continue to be a player in the market especially with the implementation of Afta in two years.

He commended Naza Group for setting up its headquarters in Kampung Baru and expressed hope that this would help spearhead development of the village.

Dr Mahathir said he was ashamed of Kampung Baru with its unstructured development and houses with corrugated zinc roofs.

He said visitors who stayed at hotels around the area had complained about it.

"I told them that these people are far from poor as their land is actually worth millions."