

Quick-minded and sharp-tongued as ever

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KUALA LUMPUR. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was his usual vintage self when he walked into the conference room on the 41st floor of Tower One of the Petronas twin skyscrapers.

Dressed in a grey Nehru-collar suit, he sat down and told reporters who had gathered there on short notice for his news conference: "I suppose you want me to talk about Proton and Tengku Mahaleel. Am I right? Is that why you are here?"

Quick-minded and sharp-tongued, he waved several sheets of paper and

remarked that he had made notes on what he wanted to say on the issue.

"If I say the wrong words, I may be sued for libel and dismissed like Mahaleel for wrongful statement and communication, so I am going to be very careful," said the former prime minister who is now Proton adviser.

After making a statement on Proton Holdings Bhd's decision not to renew the contract of its group CEO Tan Sri Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff, he answered questions on Proton, Mahaleel, Approved Permits, the New Economic Policy and

the unpegging of the ringgit.

He was sarcastic and funny at times.

On remarks that Proton needed to improve the quality of its cars, he said there were complaints that the Proton car was useless and that people had to use a shoehorn to get into the car.

"Just because somebody finds it difficult to get into the GEN.2 does not mean the GEN.2 is a failure," he said.

At the end of his 45-minute press conference, Dr Mahathir got up and shook hands with some reporters before leaving.