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MAHATHIR-AP

MAHATHIR: STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN AP ISSUANCE AND PROTON PRODUCTION

GURUN, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has suggested that a balance be found between the issuance of Approval Permit (AP) for imported cars and the production of Proton cars.

This balance would be necessary to ensure that the sale of Proton cars is not compromised as this in turn would have a negative impact on the local automotive industry, he said.

He said that when the government opened the Proton plant, many had become sales agents for the car, but if too many APs are given out, these agents would have to close shop.

"There has to be a balance in the issuing of APs and the sales of Proton cars, so that the sales of Proton would not be jeopardised while the livelihood of many other parties such as sales agents and vendors is not affected," he said in his speech during a celebration here today in honour of his 80th birthday last month.

The event was organised by Naza Automotive Manufacturing Sdn Bhd which is the producer of Naza vehicles.

Asked about his suggestion at a press conference later, Dr Mahathir said: "There must be a balance. If the APs are to be issued, let them not reach a point where they can kill Proton and if Proton is allowed to progress, let it not come to a point where it kills other parties."

He, however, said that he did not have a specific formula to balance the issuing of APs.

Dr Mahathir said that while he was the Prime Minister, the government implemented the issuance of AP to give Bumiputeras the chance to become entrepreneurs in the sales of imported cars.

But some parties, he said, had misused the privilege by "opening up shops to sell APs".

"Because of AP, many entrepreneurs have successfully opened imported car sales shops, but among them, some have had taken the short-cut to profits by selling the APs," he lamented.

On his birthday celebration, the former premier expressed his gratitude as more than 1,000 people, most of them living around Gurun, had attended the event. -- BERNAMA

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