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Mahathir-Proton

PROTON ADVISER LAMENTS INFLUX OF FOREIGN CARS

PUTRAJAYA, May 25(Bernama) -- Proton Holdings Bhd adviser Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today lamented the level of importation of foreign cars so much so that there seems to be no more protection for cars made by the national car manufacturer.

The former prime minister said that cars were even being imported from countries which did not allow Proton into their markets.

"They are freely sold in Malaysia. Here, we find every make of car. You don't see this thing in other countries," he told reporters after attending a function at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here.

He said the reason why Proton's share of the market was going down was easy to understand.

"It is going down because you are importing so many foreign cars. And I believe that to import, you need to have the APs (approved permits). They are giving APs apparently quite freely.

"The Chinese car is coming, Chevrolet cars made in Korea are here, lots of Korean cars are coming. The idea that we should protect the national car is no longer there," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Proton understood that it must compete with other car manufacturers.

"We should compete, of course, but others are not letting Proton go into their country that freely.

"We allow them to bring in (cars) freely but when you go to their countries, do you see a lot of Proton cars? No," he said in driving home the point on what Proton was up against.

Dr Mahathir also said that Proton cars were not that costly now.

"If you take away the excise duty and all that, it should be very cheap. But we can't go there (to other markets).

"But everybody comes to Malaysia, anybody who wants to sell any car will come to Malaysia," he said sarcastically.

-- BERNAMA

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