

Dr M, what's to be proud about Proton?
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Former PM Mahathir slammed the government yesterday for being too stingy and not focussing on R&D. He also claimed that this is the reason why Proton is left behind by other major car makers in the world. And what I want to say is, this is so true!

I can't agree more with Dr M. Yes, indeed this is so true, nobody can argue about this. But why did Dr M only realises this after he stepped down as our prime minister? Under his 22 years of premiership (and overseeing Proton for 20 years - Proton was incorporated in 1983), did Proton do a lot of research or was our government very generous in funding R&D?

Further, he claimed that Proton has achieved a lot even with a very small amount of R&D fund provided by the government. Is this true? Let's see what the achievement that he mentioned and is proud of are.

Let's compare the cars made by Proton during Dr M's premiership with the cars made by other car makers:

- * Proton Saga vs Mitsubishi Mirage 4th Generation
- * Proton Tiara vs Citroen AX
- * Proton Wira vs Mitsubishi Mirage 5th Generation
- * Proton Satria vs Mitsubishi Colt CAO
- * Proton Putra vs Mitsubishi Mirage Asti
- * Proton Juara vs Mitsubishi Town Box
- * Proton Perdana vs Mitsubishi Eterna

Can anybody spot the differences between the Proton products and the foreign makes? Sorry, I can't, except for the badges of the cars. That is the only difference.

Now the question is, are these re-badged cars what makes Dr M proud? Was re-badging the main field of research done during Dr M's premiership?

After all, the only thing that Proton had done was to remove the badge of the original car maker and exchange it with our very own Proton badge (don't forget the latest Proton Inspira, another re-badged car made from Mitsubishi Lancer!), yet, our government call these "products" our national cars!

And don't forget this: because of all these 'national cars', we have to pay more to buy a car in Malaysia (100 percent tax for imported cars). This is not limited to foreign cars, it applies to our Proton cars also!

If you do some research on this, you will definitely find that Proton is much cheaper in foreign countries than in Malaysia. Yes, we subsidise them to sell their car cheap in other countries!

Proud? No, not at all. Don't you feel ashamed about this? I don't know about you, but I really do.

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