

Dr M declares war on Perodua

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By Radzi Razak

Dr Mahathir Mahathir, as Proton executive chairperson, said the national carmaker will challenge Perodua in the compact car market by tying up with Japanese car maker Suzuki.

The former premier said Perodua has been chipping away at Proton's market share and it was now necessary to expand into compact car market, which is dominated by Perodua.

"Perodua supposed to stay in 660cc market. Now they have moved into the territory held by Proton.

"At the time, it is okay...but now, despite having two national car makers, our market share has gone from 80 percent to 48 percent," he said.

Mahathir was talking to reporters after the MOU signing ceremony between Suzuki and Proton, at the Proton headquarters in Shah Alam.

Mahathir (photo) however did not disclose in detail what the cooperation between Proton and Suzuki would entail.

However he said that the Japanese company has a niche and the technology to make them one of the best in the compact car market.

He added they will rebadge Suzuki models and look to develop new models with Suzuki for local markets.

"Suzuki Motors is a very successful company especially in developing compact cars which sell more than 1 million units per year.

"We will begin with modified Suzuki models then of course look to working on joint ventures for some models," he disclosed.

Meanwhile Osamu Suzuki, the chairman for Suzuki Motor Corporation, said he was happy with the cooperation and was committed to a profitable venture with the national car maker.

Through his interpreter, Suzuki also said they had ceased cooperation with Perodua, which it had business dealings previously.

"Suzuki has made progress in cooperating with Proton we don't have any other links with other car makers over here (in Malaysia)," he said.

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