

On Proton's 40th anniversary, Anwar thanks Dr M for contributions

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Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim gave rare praise to his former mentor Dr Mahathir Mohamad today, on the occasion of Proton's 40th anniversary.

He said that Proton - the brainchild of Mahathir - was an important part of the "Modern Malaysia" era.

"Modern Malaysia runs in tandem with the development of Proton. The automotive industry has great potential not only in our country but also in Asean.

"The unity government would also thank Mahathir for his contribution and role in the sector," Anwar was quoted as saying by New Straits Times.

He said this at the launch of Proton's first fully electric vehicle the X90 in Kuala Lumpur.

Anwar also paid tribute to DRB-Hicom founder - the late Yahya Ahmad - for his extraordinary "obsession" to make Proton a success.

Proton came about in 1983 after Mahathir conceived the idea of a national car and the cabinet subsequently supported the plan.

By 1985, Mahathir unveiled the Proton Saga, the country's first national car.

He had served as Proton's adviser and later chairperson after stepping down from his first run as prime minister.

He resigned as Proton chairperson in 2016 amid a tiff with then premier Najib Abdul Razak.

Anwar's move of thanking Mahathir came hours after the prime minister - at a separate event - threw a veiled jab at the nonagenarian, challenging the latter to reveal his and his family's wealth.

Mahathir has a RM150 million lawsuit against Anwar over claims that he amassed wealth for personal gain while in power.

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