

PM still waiting to meet VW boss
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said he was still waiting to meet German auto giant Volkswagen's top official to discuss a possible tie-up with troubled carmaker Proton.

"I have not seen him yet. He has not made his appearance yet but I cannot wait too long," Abdullah told reporters, referring to Volkswagen's chairman.

The government is under pressure to find a strategic partner for the loss-making national carmaker, having missed two self-imposed deadlines.

"The information relayed to me was that he wanted to see me. Well, I can't be waiting forever," Abdullah said.

Talks between the two companies have been ongoing and Abdullah revealed a week ago that officials from the German automaker had sought a meeting with him in Malaysia.

The last deadline missed for a possible alliance was March 31, with Second Finance Minister Nor Mohamed Yakcop saying the government was still reviewing options.

Abdullah has said Proton would turn to US auto giant General Motors if talks with Volkswagen failed.

In March, negotiations with French car giant PSA Peugeot-Citroen for an alliance collapsed after almost six months of negotiations.

Three Malaysian automotive firms have also expressed interest in partnering the national carmaker.

Proton posted a third consecutive quarterly loss of RM281.45 million in the three months to December compared with a net profit of RM86.51 million a year earlier.

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