

No Truth In Claim Malaysian Cars Expensive Due To Proton
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KLANG -- There is no truth in claims by certain quarters that car prices are expensive in Malaysia because of the existence of the national car, Proton, says former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"This is not true. The government has been imposing high tax for imported cars even from before so that the country does not lose out substantially in the outflow of the ringgit to foreign countries," he said at the joint launching of the Proton's Logistics Centres in Sijangkang and Tanjung Malim in Sijangkang here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Proton adviser, said Malaysians who bought Proton cars were doing a charity because when Proton becomes a success story and prospered, many Malaysians would get jobs and could support their families, some of whom have big families.

"We want to see Proton playing a role as a socio machinery, helping to provide for the well-being of all Malaysians," said Dr Mahathir, who initiated the national car project when he was the prime minister.

Following Proton's move to set up the logistics centres in Sijangkang and Tanjung Malim to improve the quality of Proton cars before delivering the cars to the customers, Dr Mahathir said he was confident that Proton might soon capture the domestic automotive market and become the No. 1 car seller in the country.

Through the logistics centres, assembled Proton cars at the main manufacturing plant in Shah Alam will be sent to the centres in Sijangkang and Tanjung Malim for testing and post-delivery inspection to ensure its quality conformed to the stipulated standard before delivering the cars to the dealers and for export.

Dr Mahathir said usually Proton sales clinched 80 per cent but with the existence of Perdoua and other brands of imported cars from South Korea and other countries, Proton sales had taken a beating.

He said car sales in Malaysia had shot up to 570,000 in one year, the highest sales figure in Southeast Asia, as other countries might be selling more than that but their population was 10 times more than Malaysia's.

Dr Mahathir said Proton must focus attention on quality because in business image was important although some may complain of dissatisfaction.

"It may be only one person complaining but it may portray as though all Proton cars are problematic. If we don't have a good image, everybody will think that this image is not only confined to one car but the whole problem," he said.

Dr Mahathir said a blogger wrote in his blog claiming that Proton car windows cannot be lowered, and the car owner had to open his car door and get down from his car to pay toll.

'I think this is something overboard. I also drive my car through tolled roads and I've yet to see people driving Proton cars getting down from their vehicles to pay toll,' he said.

"Nevertheless, many believe this is what actually happened because although it is a small complaint but even a giant company must give good treatment," he added.

(Bernama)

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