Dr Mahathir: 'Too many APs will kill Proton. But other quarters should not be "killed" at the expense of promoting Proton'

Balance AP issuance with Proton car production, Dr M suggests

BY TUNKU SHAHARIAH AND AAZNI MUSTAFA

SUNGAI PETANI: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has proposed that the issuance of Approved Permits (APs) to import cars be balanced with the production of Proton cars.

He said a balance would ensure Proton car sales were not affected.

'There must be a balance between the issuance of APs and the sale of Proton cars, as we don't want sales of the national car to be affected and people like sales agents and vendors to close down their businesses," he said at his 80th birthday bash thrown in his honour by Naza Automotive Manufacturing Sdn Bhd in Gurun, near here, yesterday.

Later, at a press conference, Dr Mahathir stressed that there must be a balance. "Too many APs will kill Proton. But other quarters should not be 'killed' at the expense of promoting Proton."

Dr Mahathir, however, offered no particular formula.

"When 1 was the prime minister, we issued APs to give an opportunity to bumiputras to become entrepreneurs, by selling imported cars.

"Many entrepreneurs succeeded in opening imported car sales outlets because of the APs, but then there were others who took the easy way out by selling their APs," he added.

Earlier, in his speech, Dr Mahathir lauded Naza Automotive for establishing a base in Gurun and making it well known in the automotive industry.

He also thanked Naza Motor Group managing director Tan Sri Nasimuddin SM Amin for throwing the birthday bash, which was attended by about 3,000 guests and Naza employees.

Also present at the bash was Kedah Acting Mentri Besar Datuk Mahdzir KhalidDr Mahathir also urged the state government to help Naza to expand its automotive industry in the state.

"My only wish on my birthday is to see Kedah materialise into an automotive state before 1 finally close my eyes," Dr Mahathir said.

At another birthday bash the night before, he said he had accepted an offer to be the patron of the Ex-Wakil Rakyat Council.