

PM challenges Naza to do better than Proton

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KEPALA BATAS: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said Malaysian car makers should not be afraid to compete with each other and their foreign counterparts in the global market.

He said such healthy competition would realise the country's aspiration of becoming the region's hub in automotive industry.

The Prime Minister called on national car maker, Proton Holdings Bhd, and third auto player, Naza Corporation Sdn Bhd, to compete with each other to come out with cars which were of the highest quality, standard and class and accepted internationally.

The companies, he said, should

take advantage of the numerous benefits offered under the National Automotive Policy.

They could also form strategic partnerships with key players and continue to improve the human capital aspects.

Abdullah, in commending Naza for having developed itself well in the country's automotive industry, expressed hope the company could become the most outstanding automobile company in the country.

"I will not be jealous of you (Naza) if you can do better than Proton.

"However, I will be angry with Proton if they can't be the best car maker.

"I hope that both Naza and Proton can compete like siblings," he

said at the unveiling of Naza Corporation's Naza Sutera.

The Sutera is an affordable locally-made compact car equipped with added safety features.

Abdullah also attended the ground-breaking ceremony for Naza's new plant and witnessed the signing of an agreement between the company and its dealers from 11 countries, paving the way for Sutera to be exported.

Present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, former Chief Minister Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu, Naza founder and chairman Tan Sri Nasimuddin S.M. Amin and China Aviation Industry Corporation president Zhang Hong Biao.

The country's other national car maker is Perusahaan Otomobil

Kedua Sdn Bhd.

Abdullah said to ensure Malaysia's role as a global player in the industry, the people should not be afraid to face challenges coming their way.

He said they should also be well-equipped, especially in knowledge and skills.

"The people should also be hardworking, possess all the fine qualities and be responsible in whatever they do.

"Don't be like some people in those days who lacked confidence (when doing anything).

"If we want to ensure our success and future development, we should have full confidence and prepare ourselves to face challenges. Only then can we achieve Vision 2020."