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Dr M: DRB-Hicom lifted Proton image

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KUALA LUMPUR: Proton Holdings Bhd's image has been significantly burnished since the takeover by DRB-Hicom Bhd, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the adviser to the national carmaker.

The former prime minister said that the new management under chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Khamil Jamil was very focused and aggressive in ensuring that the image of the company was on par with other international carmakers.

"The previous management had a marketing strategy that portrayed Proton as producing low-cost cars. The people's perception of low-cost cars is that of low quality.

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— TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

me," he told reporters yesterday.

Dr Mahathir also stressed that in the future Proton cars would not be moved into the market without proper quality certification.

"Malaysians will not see new Proton cars with windows that cannot be wound down after some time, anymore," he said.

He said the new Proton cars would also improve significantly in terms

of handling and driving quality.

Dr Mahathir said the Proton *Preve* was the best effort to date by Proton to showcase its international automotive standards.

"There is much more to come. I have been briefed almost weekly by the Proton management and sense so far, that it has a clear direction of growth.

"They have identified areas which have to be enhanced, corrected and even scraped. They know what they are doing," he added.

DRB-Hicom bought a 42.7% stake in Proton from Khazanah Nasional Bhd for RM1.29bil in January this year.

A turnaround business plan for Proton is also on the cards and slated to be unveiled by March next year.

— Bernama