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TAPPING EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS: Suzuki chairman and CEO Osamu Suzuki (left) with Dr Mahathir after the signing ceremony of an MoU and licence agreement between Proton, DRB-Hicom and Suzuki at the Proton Centre of Excellence facility in Shah Alam. The parties will form a long-term strategic collaboration and partnership. Pic by Husein Shahrudin

Proton in 'strategic' tie-up with Suzuki

National carmaker to leverage on Suzuki's small car technology, says chairman Dr Mahathir

by KAVITHAH RAKWAN

PROTON Holdings Bhd has signed an agreement with Japan's Suzuki Motors Corp which will allow the national carmaker to jointly develop a product for the compact car segment and help boost its sales.

Proton, its parent company DRB-Hicom Bhd and Suzuki inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and licence agreement yesterday which will see the parties "form a long-term strategic collaboration and partnership".

Proton's chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the agreement would allow Proton to leverage on Suzuki's small car technology.

Although details of the collaboration have yet to be finalised, it is understood Proton could be interested in Suzuki's B-segment (small car category) multipurpose vehicle,



Abdul Harith says the 1st phase of the project is scheduled to begin production in the next 16 months. Pic by Husein Shahrudin

the Artega, which will fill a gap in its current line-up.

However, Dr Mahathir said details of the partnership have yet to be worked out and any cooperation would complement Proton's present model line-up.

Meanwhile, Proton CEO Datuk Abdul Harith Abdullah said the first phase of the project is scheduled to

begin production in the next 16 months at the company's Tanjung Malim plant in Perak.

"Suzuki is strong for its technology and expertise in producing small engine segments, especially in the A and B segments that would complement Proton's Long Range Product plan.