

# Johor Sultan, PM help boost Proton interest

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**PETALING JAYA:** The huge publicity the Johor Ruler and Prime Minister taking a ride in a 34-year-old sky-blue Proton Saga is just the thing to reignite interest in the car brand.

Malaysians are brimming with pride as the first national car is in the spotlight again, with Proton representatives saying interest in the brand has spiked.

On Thursday, Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar personally drove Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the Senai International Airport in a first-generation Proton Saga, which Dr Mahathir had gifted to the Ruler's father way back in 1985.

A Proton sales representative, who only wanted to be known as Mirza, said bookings for Proton cars in his Malacca branch increased by 80% since the picture went viral.

"There is so much more interest in Proton now," he said.

Mirza said interest also went up "because it is no ordinary person who drove the car".

The new-found excitement has also rubbed off on student Alrik Shen Praba who plans to buy a Proton X70 in the future.

"Proton cars have always been good for simple use, but seeing Sultan Ibrahim's car in such good condition after decades gives me more confidence in Proton," said the 18-year-old.

Mark (not his real name), an executive and car enthusiast, said it was nostalgic seeing Dr Mahathir in a first-generation Saga since Proton was his very own creation.

"I know Sultan Ibrahim is a huge car fan so I am not surprised that the car is still in pristine condition.

"It's touching to see that Sultan Ibrahim chose the Proton. It really reminds one of the good old days," said the 25-year-old.

Wong Zhi Yong, 19, said he took immense pride in the national car.

"This positive news will definitely encourage more Malaysians to use local cars, as figures like Sultan Ibrahim are also driving the Proton," said the student, who drives a 30-year-old Proton Saga himself.