

Third car project to create awareness

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SEPANG: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government's move to launch its third national car project is to enable Malaysians to learn and understand automotive engineering technology.

Speaking after launching the Asia GT Festival at the Sepang International Circuit yesterday, Mahathir said Malaysians think that national cars are bad, and do not support the government's plan to launch the third car project.

"They say 'don't buy Malaysian cars' and 'buy foreign cars instead.' They think they know everything, including the technology involved. That is why they don't want the third car and say it is a waste of money.

"They know nothing (about) automotive engineering. That is why (the government) plans to introduce the third national car, to learn the technology involved. You see how much progress China has made in a short while because they decided to go into the automotive business."

Mahathir also commended the participation of 70 Proton Saga first-generation cars in the Malaysia Speed Festival Saga Cup



Mahathir waves from the passenger seat of the electric super car at the Sepang International Circuit yesterday.
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race, saying their engines sounded like Formula One cars while racing.

The race was held to pay tribute to Mahathir's brainchild from the 1980s - the Proton Saga.

Earlier, Malaysian race car driver Jazeman Jaafar took Mahathir for a

lap around the track in a high-powered electric car, the NiO EP9, one of the fastest electric cars in the world, Bernama reported.

On his experience sitting in the NiO EP9, Mahathir said it was very thrilling and "my heart rate went up

to 140 beats per minute."

Malaysia hosted the first Asia GT Festival (outside China), which started on Friday and ended yesterday, with more than 30 GT cars from all over the world racing for a prize pool of RM5.45 million.