

PROTON'S SAGA



Dr M to the defence...

NST- 6/7/2005

● ON TENGKU MAHALEEL

I think Tengku Mahaleel is duty-bound to protect Proton. He has to explain things because if he doesn't, the sales of Proton cars will go down. If people start saying that Proton cars are bad, then he must say that they are good. If the figures given are wrong, he has to correct them.

What has been said against Proton undermines Proton's credibility and, therefore, its sales. A good CEO must defend his company.

As far as I know, Mahaleel has not been asked to leave.

● ON CRITICISM OF PROTON CARS

When people start saying our cars are of poor quality, naturally it undermines the sale of cars, especially when the person making the statement is very high up and responsible and says that we should look into how we produce cars. Then, of course, people will lose confidence in our cars.

● ON BEING A HEADACHE

I hope I am not going to give any headache to anybody. The last time, I was supposed to have caused a headache to the Government because of my attitude. I have tried to avoid making any comments. Unfortunately, my name has been dragged in by some people to justify what they did and I need to explain a little bit on the government process so that you will understand exactly what happened.

● ON APPROVED PERMITS

Of the 67,000 APs issued last year, only 12,600 were given to 82 companies while 20 companies received 54,400. There seems to be some irregularity here. Why is there a small number of companies getting such a big number of APs? This is not in the spirit of nurturing Bumiputera entrepreneurship whereby the APs should benefit a big number of people rather than a few.

● ON IMPORTED CARS

I was indeed very surprised to find out that completely built-up cars (CBUs) are imported at a landed price of only RM11,000. Now, at RM11,000 it is hardly possible to buy the components, never mind put them together. Even the raw materials cost more than RM11,000.

● ON THE UNDER-DECLARATION

I asked the minister to check on the under-declaration of South Korean cars several times from the time I was PM and as recently as three months ago. However, the minister didn't make any attempt to investigate and the cars continued to be imported below the cost of raw materials.

They said I was a dictator but the procedure was that the minister would make the decision and the Cabinet would be told later.