

**PM: Disabled can contribute, too**  
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**By JOSEPH KAOS Jr**

KUALA LUMPUR: Provide the disabled with equal opportunity and they will prosper, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Notable figures like theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, who is paralysed and has a speech disability, and the late Datuk Dr Ismail Mohd Salleh, a renowned economist who was visually challenged, were testament to this, he said.

"They (Hawking and Dr Ismail) are models that disability should not mean the end of the world for the handicapped. It does not mean the disabled are incapable of contributing to the nation, themselves and their family," said Najib in his speech when opening the country's first disabled-friendly car showroom at Taman Wahyu here yesterday.

The Prime Minister added that the disabled did not want sympathy but only opportunities so they could live with a high sense of self-esteem.

The showroom, operated by Perodua dealer Faresh Motor (M) Sdn Bhd, features ramps for easy wheelchair access and disabled-friendly washrooms.

Its founder Ahmad Faresh Ahmad Zahid, who is disabled, mooted the idea after realising the difficulties the handicapped faced when shopping for a car.

The 42-year-old said cars equipped with special modifications for disabled people were available at the showroom.

"Usually one has to buy a car then go elsewhere and modify it to be disabled-friendly, and that would take time," he said.

National paralympic athlete Azman Hassan, who attended the launch, gave his thumbs up on the setting up of a disabled-friendly car showroom.

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