

**Dr Mahathir's Stubbornness among Factors in Non-competitive Performance of Proton**  
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TEMERLOH, April 2 (Bernama) -- Former Proton Holdings Bhd (Proton) chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's stubbornness was one of the factors which fuelled the local car manufacturer's non-competitive performance.

UMNO Information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa said as such, it was difficult for the government to rectify the financial situation of the government-owned company, as the former prime minister refused to accept the opinion of others.

"If anyone in the company mooted different ideas from his (Dr Mahathir's) views, then that person will have problems," he told reporters after opening the Kuala Krau UMNO branch meeting here Saturday.

During Dr Mahathir's time, he said Proton had made a number of transactions, including its cooperation with Group Lotus Plc, which resulted in the company to be dragged into limbo.

Dr Mahathir resigned on Thursday as Proton chairman, chairman of Group Lotus Plc, chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Petronas, and adviser to the Langkawi Development Authority and Tioman Island Development Authority.

Annuar said despite facing serious financial problems, Proton still could not avoid being shackled to Dr Mahathir's ideas.

He said Proton at one time, had conquered 70 per cent of the domestic car market but now, it could only gain penetration rate of less than 30 per cent.

"It shows that Proton has been facing a huge financial crisis throughout Tun Dr Mahathir's many years' tenure as chairman. In fact, the government has spent huge amounts of money to make sure it can continue to operate," he said.

Therefore, he described Dr Mahathir's resignation as the government's best chance to restore and save the national auto maker from further losses.

He said the Proton management should be helped to manage the company in the best professional manner possible, including by arranging a new strategy to forge partnerships with automotive companies from other countries.

At the same time, Annuar said, an explanation should also be given to the people, including from Proton itself, to avoid misunderstanding over the issue.

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