

**Proton Golden Era Restored As Mahathir's Political Interference Ended - Najib  
Bernama  
June 14, 2016**

PUTRAJAYA, June 14 (Bernama) -- The golden era of Proton Holdings Bhd (Proton) is expected to be restored since Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's political interference in the national carmaker has come to an end, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said there had been too much political interference in Proton's strategy management including of personnel and business model when the former prime minister was holding Proton chairman's post.

"Now, I am pleased to say, there have been significant changes at the top levels of Proton. Tun Mahathir's era of political interference has come to an end.

"We saw the results of that early this year. A manufacturer which should be a source of national pride was facing a very difficult situation," he said at the launch of the fourth generation of Proton Perdana here today.

Effective March 30, Dr Mahathir has resigned as chairman of Proton, the post he was holding since 2014.

According to Najib, the government had to step in again to assist Proton in order to protect Malaysian jobs, families who rely on Proton, and to protect the company's business partners' income and livelihoods.

"We stepped in because the well-being of the people is always our first concern. We will never fail to support Malaysian workers and suppliers. We will always fight to ensure that no one is left behind," he explained.

Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, said it was time for lessons to be learned now, and for serious measures and reforms to be put in place for Proton to get back on track and realise its potential once again.

"I am told that in anticipation of its launch, 900 units of the Perdana were pre-booked - which shows the confidence that people have in this new model, and their desire for Proton to succeed," he added.

"Proton's new management tells me that they are confident that customers will not only

like the Perdana's elegant looks, they will also love the drive.

"I am looking to getting behind the wheel myself before too long!" he said and was met with thunderous applause from the crowd.

Najib said: "Let the new car, and the new management of Proton, be judged on their merits.

"I know that we all wish them every success in growing their sales, in leading in innovation, and ensuring the company has a bright future, both in terms of its products and the well-being of its hard-working employees."

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