

**Mahathir bemoans 'loss' of Proton, says more assets may be sold**  
**Free Malaysia Today**  
**May 25, 2017**

**The former prime minister says Proton may do splendidly after Geely buys over a 49.9% stake but that he cannot be proud of the success of something that does not belong to him or his country.**

KUALA LUMPUR: A sad, but still sarcastic, Dr Mahathir Mohamad today lamented the sale of Proton Holdings Bhd to foreigners.

In the same breadth, he said with a touch of cynicism that the sale of Proton was but the beginning of Malaysian assets, including land, being sold off to foreigners.

“They say Proton is my brainchild. Now the child of my brain has been sold. Yes. I am sad. I can cry. But the deed is done. Proton can no longer be national. No national car now.”

The former prime minister, who started the national carmaker to instill pride in Malaysians that locals were good enough to produce cars, said in his latest blogpost:

“We Malaysians are glad to be rid of this pesky car. I am sure Proton will do well. It will be a commercial success. It will be sold all over the world. The Proton name will be everywhere.

“It will be like Singapore. Malaysians are proud of this great city-state. If it had not been sold it would be, perhaps, as well developed as Kuala Kedah or Kuala Perlis. Then we cannot be proud of Singapore.”

Yesterday, China’s Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, which owns the Sweden-based Volvo Cars, agreed to buy 49.9% of Proton and a 51% stake in Lotus Cars from DRB-Hicom Bhd.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians could be proud of Proton, as with money and superior technology provided by Geely, it would compete with Rolls Royce and Bentley.

However, Dr Mahathir said, he could not be proud of this.

“I cannot be proud of the success of something that does not belong to me or my country. Maybe other Malaysians will, but not me. Come to think of it, if our country is sold to others, to the very rich people of other countries, I am sure our country will become well developed too. It can even be a fully developed country – exceeding the expectations of Vision 2020.”

He said the country might, if taken over by others, have the best infrastructures and be beautifully landscaped and lighted. However, he could not be proud to live “on the fringes of this great country so well developed by the buyers”.

The PPBM chairman said: “I will die soon. I am already beyond average age. And as I slip into my final years, or month or days, I will watch as our beloved country is sold to foreigners to settle the trillion ringgits that we owe. We will have to sell more and more of our country.”

Saying Malaysia’s asset was its land, he added that in the past chunks of it had been sold off.

“We lost the land we sold. That is what we are doing now. And that will be what we will have to do – or forfeit our country; like we forfeit Proton.”

Recently, he had criticised the sale of land to foreigners, especially the multi-billion Forest City project being built by China’s Country Garden.

“Proton the child of my brain has been sold. It is probably the beginning of the great sell-out. The process is inexorable. No other way can we earn the billions to pay our debts. The only way is to sell our assets. And eventually we will lose our country, a great country no doubt, but owned by others.”

He ended his blog post in a touching manner: “I am a sissy. I cry even if Malaysians are dry-eyed. My child is lost. And soon my country. Please excuse me.”

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Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/05/25/mahathir-bemoans-loss-of-proton-says-more-assets-may-be-sold/>