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DR MAHATHIR UNVEILS PROTON TIARA

KUALA LUMPUR, April 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the Proton Tiara, the new Proton Citroen model, at a glittering ceremony at the Putra World Trade Centre, here, tonight.

Dubbed as the Jewel Of The Nation, the 1.1 litre Tiara will have a market segment of its own as it would fill the gap untouched by the 0.6 litre Perodua Kancil and the 1.3 litre Proton Iswara, Wira and Satria.

The five-door five-seater revolutionary Proton Tiara is a joint venture between usahasama Proton-DRB (USPD) and Citroen Automobile Industry.

According to Usahasama Proton DRB (USPD), its commercial launch will be in early May this year.

Apart from the 1.1 litre version, USPD would also introduce two more Proton Citroen variants -- a 1.5 litre diesel in September this year and a 1.4 litre multi-point injection engine sometime next year.

Like the USPD Satria, the 1.1 litre variants are assembled by Automotive Manufacturers (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd in Pekan, Pahang. Currently, the production of the 1.1 litre Proton Citroen variant is less than 600 units per month.

By the time of the launch, there will be some 1,800 to 2,000 cars available. Both the 1.1 and 1.5 litre versions will eventually have a total production of 2,500 cars per month.

Present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and USPD chief executive officer Abdul Rashid Rahim.

Speaking to reporters later, Rashid said the company expects to sell "a few thousand" units of the 1.1 litre model within a week after it is opened for booking beginning tomorrow.

"So far, we have received about 1,000 inquiries from people who have shown interest to buy," he said.

The first car will be delivered on May 1, he said.

He said the 1.1 litre model will come in seven colours including metallic blue, green, red, yellow, silver and grey.

Rashid said the diesel engine for the 1.5 litre model would be introduced in October while the automatic version was being developed.

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