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New Perodua models

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SECOND national car manufacturer, Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua), will introduce three new models in the next three years and a 100 per cent Malaysian-made car by the year 2001.

Its managing director, Encik Abdul Rahman Omar, said new models of the Perodua cars are expected to roll out by the middle of next year, 1999 and 2000.

"Each new car would take between 24 and 36 months to design depending on the localised content of the car. If we need more local components then, it would take a longer period as we need to design the component and make sure that it fits the car," he told reporters after the launching of the new Perodua Rusa line in Serendah yesterday.

The new assembly line was launched by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who also witnessed the handing over of European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval and Conformity of Production certificates from UK-based Vehicle Certification Agency.

The approval will enable Kancil to be registered in all the European Community member states while the conformity certification takes recognition of Perodua internationally for its manufacturing ability in producing quality and reliable products.

Abdul Rahman said the new cars will be different from the current Kancil, but it will be a modified version of Daihatsu. It is currently still in its designing stage.

This year, the company hopes to produce 66,000 units of Kancil and 20,000 Rusa vans this year.

The company recently rolled out its 100,000th unit which was produced just after 29 months since its launch by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in August 1994.

In 1995, the company introduced the third variant, Kancil EZ, the automatic version - after the first two Kancil EX and GX - which is equipped with a catalytic converter to regulate the emission from petrol powered vehicles.

In October the same year, the sporty Kancil Era was launched before it moved into the multi-utility vehicle Rusa on March 6 1996.

Abdul Rahman also said the company would be investing RM1.3 billion on a five year expansion plan beginning this year. The expansion would include a research and development centre which is expected to have a minimum cost of RM150 million and other facilities such as painting shop and body shop.

"For this year and next, we have adequate production capacity of 120,000 units per year. But we are forecasting a demand of 140,000 units and would need to expand. We have not decided on the capacity... the most economical would be for 80,000 units per year... or we can install 120,000 and 150,000," he said.

The company has also booked a plot of 100,000 acres of land situated behind its current plant for future expansion. The purchase, Abdul Rahman said, is still under discussion.

As of March 1997, there are 116,231 units of the Perodua-made cars on the road. Sales of Perodua cars for 1996 totalled about 51,000 units or 17.3 per cent share of the local passenger car market.

Not only has Perodua secured a sizable share of the local market, it has also managed to ship 160 units to Brunei, 41 to Malta, 30 to Cyprus and 12 to Mauritius.

In the UK, Perodua has appointed Perodua Cars (UK) Ltd to market and distribute the Kancils. Perodua Cars (UK) Ltd is the sole distributor for Perodua's products in the UK.

The first shipment to the UK is in June. Perodua is targeting to export about 1,200 units to UK in the first year. The registration of passenger cars in the UK in 1996 was 2.02 million units and the under 1000cc segment constituted about 3.7 per cent of the market (75,000 units).

Abdul Rahman said that Kancil 880cc will be launched in UK in August and the company is targeting at 250 units.

"Between August and December we are targeting sale of about 560 units. For the following year, it would depend on the market response," he said.

It was reported that Perodua would be exporting 2,500 units this year, including the left-hand drive model which is expected to be produced and exported by the second half of the year.

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