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Proton's new model a result of smart alliance with Lotus

PERUSAHAAN Otomobil Nasional Berhad's latest car, which is being designed using the latest computer aided technology, will feature characteristics of both the Proton and Lotus vehicles.

Describing the new model as a result of a smart partnership, Proton said:

"The new car will be designed by our boys ... it is actually one of the biggest projects for us following our linkage with Lotus.

"We want to produce a car of our own design, stamp our brand name on it and claim it as our car," he said yesterday.

Tengku Mahaleel, who earlier spoke on Proton's experiences in the automotive industry during a dialogue session moderated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said the linkage between Proton and Lotus had benefited both parties.

"We have learnt a great deal from Lotus, which is basically an engineering consultant company, and they too have picked up some things from us," he said.

"To sum up, our partnership has been all the more exciting because it has enabled both parties to move forward," he added.

Tengku Mahaleel admitted that the partnership had not been smooth all the way.

"There are problems in our relationship ... problems relating to work and cultural differences.

"However, the motivation for us to succeed will ensure our partnership will survive," he said.

Earlier, Tengku Mahaleel said the automotive industry, which he described as the world's largest manufacturing concern, involving a workforce of 12 million people with a turnover of more than US\$2 trillion dollar (RM5 trillion), was going through many structural changes.

He said the changes were related to stricter regulations concerning emission standards and safety concerns.

Another one of the changes, Tengku Mahaleel said, concerned the deregulation of global markets.

He said although deregulation provided opportunities to some, it also posed threats to others.

"This is because there already is an overcapacity in the auto industry right now...it has been the case since the last five years."

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