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Proton to make another Citroen-based model

PERUSAHAAN Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton) yesterday announced plans to introduce a Proton model based on the Citroen Saxo technology by the end of next year.

The new model, tentatively called "PS8", will have a capacity of 1114 cc, slightly larger than the current Proton Tiara, also based on a Citroen model.

It will be made available in markets where Proton cars are marketed and 38 other countries.

The Citroen Saxo was launched in mid-1996 in Europe and has been extremely well received. After its launch in the UK, as many as 45,000 units have been sold.

"The price will be slightly higher than the Proton Tiara but (the new model) will be attractive and comparable (to Proton Tiara)," DRB-Hicom Group chairman Datuk Mohd Saleh Sulong said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Mohd Saleh was speaking at a Press conference after the signing of a collaborative agreement between Proton and France-based Automobiles Citroen SA, witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Proton was represented by chief executive officer Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff, USPD by chief executive officer Abbas Mehad while Automobiles Citroen was represented by chairman Jacques Calvet and deputy managing director Claude Satinet.

The collaboration will also include Usahasama Proton-DRB Sdn Bhd (USPD), whereby it will be involved in manufacture, assembly, distribution and after-sales service.

Proton will undertake the overall product engineering development, local content development as well as quality of manufactured vehicles while Citroen will provide the technical assistance and training services.

The PS8 model will be assembled at Automotive Manufacturers (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd's plant in Pekan, Pahang and the operation will start in the middle of next year.

"We are currently preparing the facility," said Mohd Saleh, adding that it is expected to have a production capacity of 60,000 units a year.

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