

22 JUN 1998

EON-Sales

EON SOLD 21,000 PROTON CARS IN JAN-MAY 1998

SHAH ALAM, June 22 (Bernama) -- Car distributor Edaran Otomobil Nasional (EON) sold about 21,000 Proton cars in the first five months of this year, representing a market share of 54 per cent compared with 45 per cent for the corresponding period last year.

EON chairman Tan Sri Mohamed Saleh Sulong said today the Proton sales had begun to pick up again and attributed this to the various programmes initiated by the company to enhance sales.

Usahama Proton-DRB, the distributor of other Proton variants, meanwhile, sold 4,400 cars from January to May this year.

Speaking at a ceremony to commemorate EON's one millionth customer officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, here, Mohamed Saleh said the company's auto fairs had also attracted many customers looking for reliable, affordable and quality refurbished used vehicles.

He said the relaxation in hire purchase loan conditions by the government for cars priced RM40,000 and below and the increase in the amount of loans available to 80 per cent from 70 per cent previously, coupled with a longer repayment period, had helped boost the sales of Proton cars.

However, he said, the volume of sales can be further improved if the government agreed to extend such incentives to include cars priced RM60,000 and below.

He said EON had adopted several methods to increase demand for Proton cars, including price reductions and intensifying its advertising.

As of May this year, EON Motoria, a subsidiary of EON, sold about 800 refurbished cars valued at RM20 million.

On the export of Proton cars, he said that for the first quarter of this year, an export value of RM268 million was achieved.

The group is targeting an export total of 52,000 units this year against 27,000 units exported last year.

"We are confident that the DRB-Hicom group will be able to increase exports up to more than RM1 billion in 1998," he added.

In this context, a new company called DRB-Hicom Export Corporation Sdn Bhd has been established. This company, according to Mohamed Saleh, will be involved in the export of Modenas motorcycles and Hicom Perkasa trucks and automotive components.

On July 2, DRB-Hicom Export Corporation will sign agreements with six distributors in Cyprus, Argentina, Malta, Mauritius, Brunei and Singapore.

Mohamed Salleh also said that Proton would continue to introduce new models by early 2000. -- BERNAMA

DVS SHY JK