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Engine-Launching

FIRST MALAYSIAN PROTOTYPE AUTOMOTIVE ENGINE LAUNCHED

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- The first Malaysian prototype automotive engine "PETRONAS E01e" for the commercial vehicles was launched at a ceremony in a hotel at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) here tonight.

Special Functions Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin performed the official launching on behalf of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was indisposed.

The 2000cc high performance engine had been successfully tested on Proton Satria and Proton Lotus Elise. It was designed and developed by a team of 15 engineers from Petronas, the main sponsor of the Formula Race One team of Red Bull-Sauber-Petronas in 1995.

The sponsorship subsequently led to the setting up of Sauber Petronas Engineering AG (SPE) with 40:60 equity share between Petronas and the Swiss automotive engineering technology company.

SPE was initially set up to meet the engineering needs of the Formula One racing team. This developed into cooperation in other areas including technological transfer and design as well as development of the latest commercial engine.

The commercial engine project was launched with two-pronged objective, making use of Formula One technology to design and develop a prototype engine for Petronas and achieving effective technological transfer and capability involving Petronas engineers in the project.

Work on the prototype engine began in March 1997 with total involvement of Petronas engineers in the designing and analysis of the engine with its development partners.

The first engine start-up was done on Feb 20 and four months later on June 23, a Proton Satria and a Proton Lotus Elise were fitted with the prototype engines for test drive at the Johor Baharu circuit in Pasir Gudang.

Petronas Chairman Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin in his speech described the launching of the prototype engine as one step forward in promoting the company's brand and Malaysia to the world.

Dr Mahathir in his message in the souvenir magazine said the development of the prototype engine marked a milestone in Malaysia's effort to develop a competitive automotive industry.

He said that although most of the components used in the production of the Proton cars were produced locally, the engine was still imported. He congratulated Petronas for taking the initiative in developing Malaysia's own engine.

--BERNAMA

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