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PERODUA-KEMBARA

PERODUA TO RAISE KEMBARA PRODUCTION TO MEET DEMAND

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- The production of Kembara, Malaysia's first four-wheel drive vehicle, will be increased to 700 units next month to meet rising customer demand, said Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) managing director Datuk Abdul Rahman Omar.

Speaking at a press preview of Kembara in Kuala Selangor last Thursday, Abdul Rahman said since bookings were opened on Aug 1, 1998, the second national car maker has received more than 475 confirmed orders.

The sales of the four wheel drive (FWD) are all the more encouraging as they were achieved without the manufacturer going overboard in attracting bookings.

For now, Kembara buyers need only wait for one to one-and-a-half months to get delivery of their vehicles, said Abdul Rahman.

"We hope Kembara will help us survive the current trying economic times," he said, adding that when vehicle sales improve in the future, Perodua was targeting to sell 600-1,000 units of the FWD each month, which is about 44 percent of the FWD market.

Based on the present output of 420 units per month, the company managed to accumulate a stock of 250 units of Kembara to meet the launch of the FWD by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

The name Kembara, which in Bahasa Malaysia means adventurous, was picked by Dr Mahathir himself out of a total of six shortlisted names submitted to him, said Abdul Rahman.

He said Perodua has invested RM46.5 million on the production line for Kembara.

The 1.3 litre compact, versatile and sporty Kembara is positioned as a sports utility vehicle (SUV) and targetted for those aged between 28 and 40 years with a monthly household income of RM3,000 to RM5,000.

With the Kembara's appealing interior and exterior, it is expected to attract both male and female buyers with the former to comprise 60 percent of the buyers.

The car is value for money with the low range Kembara EX with a solid colour priced at RM45,898.00, the medium range GX with a metallic colour at RM49,815.65 and the automatic EZ range metallic at RM52,139.19.

Kembara, known as Daihatsu Terrios in Japan, is a result of some cosmetic changes by Perodua.

Abdul Rahman said the introduction of Terrios marks Perodua's commitment to introduce new models one year after its partner, Daihatsu launches its vehicles in Japan.

He also said Perodua expects to be able to decide by November or December on the introduction of two more new models. Perodua's other models are the compact car Kancil and the multi-utility vehicle Rusa.

As of July 31, 1998, almost 200,000 units of the Kancil and the Rusa have been sold.

"Our future product line will be passenger cars below 1,000 cc and utility vehicles up to 2,000 cc or bigger," he said.

He also said that there were no plans yet for the export of the Kembara.

Kembara would be Perodua's first model to use its new corporate logo, which symbolises the company's confidence and optimism for the future.

As for local content, Kembara scored 45 points according to standards set by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Kancil got 60

points for local content.--BERNAMA
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