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Proton car sales shift into high gear in Oct

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SALES of Proton cars have increased significantly, with 9,000 units sold last month against an average of 5,000 units per month since early this year, Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton) executive chairman Tan Sri Mohd Saleh Sulong said.

He said this was due to the easing in loan facility, aggressive marketing by distributors and improvement in product quality.

Speaking at the launch of Proton Perdana V6 2.0 and Satria GTi 1.8 models by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Mohd Saleh said the Government's moves to ease loan facility and capital market were regarded as incentives to provide more credit facility to potential buyers.

"The sales figure is usually considered as the barometer of the country's economy and the increase in sales reflects that the economy is recovering," he said.

On aggressive marketing, Mohd Saleh said Edaran Otomobil Nasional Sdn Bhd (EON) and Usahasama Proton-DRB (USPD) as well as EON Motoria have conducted various car fairs in several cities.

"These fairs have been receiving encouraging response from the public," he said.

Mohd Saleh said Proton will continue to offer high-quality cars and introduce new variants and models through collaboration with Lotus Group International Ltd.

"We have been sending our engineers and designers to undergo training at Lotus and one of the results was the introduction of the two new models launched today," he said.

He said the two new models, with input from Lotus Engineering, will help boost sales of Proton cars domestically and abroad.

"We will be introducing more variants and models as we move into the next millennium and be able to compete in the local and international market.

"If we manage to increase our sales, we would also be able to increase our capability in research and development activities," he said.

Proton Perdana V6 and Satria GTi were results of the collaboration in research study between Proton Bhd and Lotus Engineering of Norwich, England.

Both cars have undergone an engine upgrade with the Perdana endowed with a new 2-litre V6 powerplant, chosen not only because the engine runs smoother but also because it gives more power and torque.

The Satria GTi's key features include a powerful 1.8 litre engine, a precisely-tuned suspension system and a well-calibrated gearing system.

The car benefits from inspired styling with exciting yet tasteful exterior and interior changes to the base model Satria.

EON will distribute and market the Perdana V6, while USPD will market the Satria GTi.

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