

06 DEC 1999

Agong-Proton

KING AND QUEEN GET TO SEE TRULY MALAYSIAN-DESIGNED CAR

SHAH ALAM, Dec 6 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz and Raja Permaisuri Tuanku Siti Aishah are today given the honour of seeing the first truly Malaysian-designed car at the Proton plant here.

The King and Queen spent half a day touring the national car manufacturer's plant.

The royal couple were accompanied by Proton Bhd chairman Tan Sri Mohamed Salleh Sulong and Proton chief executive officer Tengku Datuk Mahaleel Tengku Ariff.

The media, covering the royal couple's plant tour, were not allowed into the main manufacturing plant where Proton's newest product was housed as according to an official "it is still a secret".

At the Research and Development (R&D) centre, Sultan Salahuddin and Tuanku Siti Aishah viewed state-of-the-art facilities and leading-edge technology used in car designing.

The R&D centre, with facilities costing RM216 million, was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in May this year.

The King and Queen also witnessed the unveiling of the Special Millennium Edition of the Proton Wira 1.6.

In a briefing for the royal couple, Saleh said Proton has produced 1.4 million cars since the first Proton rolled off the assembly-line in July 1985.

He said Proton's sales had recovered in line with the economic recovery to an average of 9,000 units a month at the end of 1998 from an average of 5,000 units a month in early 1998.

"With easier credit terms for vehicle purchases, our sales have risen to 13,000 units in April this year," he said.

"And, Proton's market share has increased to 71 percent early this year from 64 percent at the end of last year."

Saleh said Proton's sales were expected to reach 15,000 units for this month.

He said Proton has also exported 195,000 units to 50 countries of which 118,000 units were to the United Kingdom, more than 14,000 units to both Singapore and Germany and 10,000 units to Australia.

-- BERNAMA

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