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Research facility completes change

SHAH ALAM, Sat. - Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd's Total Research and Development facility completes the transformation of the national car manufacturer into a full-fledged car maker.

The five-department facility was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

The departments under the facility are engineering design, engineering services, planning, styling, and homologation. The centre is a fast track project to enable Proton to engineer its own car by 2003.

Proton chief executive Tengku Datuk Mahaleel Tengku Arif said as a complete car manufacturer, it was now able to design vehicles in-house, starting from the concept stage.

This will later translate into better value for consumers, the automotive industry, and the country.

The new Proton would not only have a totally different look, but also a fresh new brand image to match.

The new brand is expected to embody values of "Passion", "Determination" and "Ingenuity" while the Proton car's main signature would be "Performance", focusing on improving ride and handling, and reducing noise, vibration and harshness to better meet customers' demands at home.

Tengku Mahaleel said the R&D capability would ensure sustainable product development which would improve profitability.

The new capability would also allow for increasing use of local raw materials which would help reduce production costs and subsequently benefit consumers.

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