

09/10/2000

Acquisition of Lotus wisest Proton move

Cheah Chor Sooi in London

THE acquisition of Lotus Group plc has been hailed by Proton chief executive Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel as "the wisest of decisions" in the field of engineering and designing by the national car maker.

In paying tribute to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for approving the purchase of an 80 per cent stake in Lotus four years ago, Tengku Mahaleel said:

"Proton has financed more than RM600 million for various expansion and research and development programmes for the whole Proton group, including Lotus.

"Lotus recently opened a new research centre in Norwich costing STG3 million (RM16.5 million) to provide world-class design and research facilities.

"We have since seen revenue, cars sold and the number of employees grow."

Tengku Mahaleel was present at the unveiling of Proton's S-ENG (Small Engine) prototype in Norwich by Dr Mahathir on Friday.

Tengku Mahaleel said the engineering programme with Lotus represented a step in the synergy and collaboration between the Proton and Lotus engineering teams, a process that had already delivered the Proton Satria GTi and recently, the Waja.

He also expressed confidence that the new Proton Malaysian Sports Car project would pave the way for the national car manufacturer to become a significant player in the global automotive industry.

"By employing Lotus niche know-how and building on Proton product development expertise, we can produce this low volume car at relatively low investment while retaining high levels of technology.

"The car will be manufactured in Malaysia and it will become the flagship vehicle for the Proton brand across the world and establish us as a significant global player in the motor industry."

(END)