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Dr M unveils Kenari in colourful ceremony

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the Kenari, a mini station wagon produced by second national car manufacturer Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua), in a colourful ceremony in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Perodua also produces the Kancil, Rusa and Kembara models.

Priced between RM37,000 and RM42,000, Perodua expects to sell 1,000 units of the Kenari a month by year-end, rising to between 1,200 and 1,600 units a month by next year.

The Kenari received encouraging response from several car analysts contacted by Business Times yesterday, particularly as a second car for families.

"The Kenari will appeal to families as a second car. It is a younger and fresher model compared with Proton models (in the same price category)," said Merrill Lynch analyst Reza Mutalib.

The Kenari is being sold at about the same price as second-hand Proton Wira cars, while it is at a higher market segment compared with the Proton Iswara and Tiara models.

The Kenari will be sold through all 20 Perodua showrooms and 120 authorised dealers in the country.

From June 1, when bookings for the Kenari was opened, until June 7, a total of 784 orders have already been received by Perodua.

With its tall and spacious profile, the "family multi usage mini wagon" offers plenty of legroom, headroom and luggage space. Beneath its compact and sporty body shell is a rigid frame that has surpassed the strict new collision safety regulations in Europe and Japan.

The Kenari is built with a highly rigid cabin encompassing crumple zones that absorb front and rear impact; and side impact beams on the doors that protect against collisions coming from either side.

The Kenari is powered by a 1-litre 12-valve electronic fuel injection engine and has hydraulic power steering. The car is available in auto or 5-speed manual transmission. The steering wheel's 4.3m turning radius is one of the smallest in its class.

Bernama reports: Perodua is in the final stage of implementing a paperless sales and registration of its vehicles, said chairman Raja Tun Mohar Raja Badiozzaman.

In his address at the launching of the Kenari, he said the paperless initiative involves the company, the Road Transport Department, the Customs Department and financial institutions.

Part of the arrangement under the paperless initiative would include electronic banking, he said, adding that Perodua has identified information technology as the way to move forward.

On the Kenari, Raja Mohar said the mini station wagon is expected to be well received by young executives and those with families.

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