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Kenari to help Perodua top 100,000-vehicle sales

KENARI, Perodua's first new car of the 21st century that was launched yesterday by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is expected to help the second national car maker vault the 100,000-vehicle mark in sales this year.

Even though the model faces only six months of sales this year and is targeted to notch about 12,000 buyers, its launch is seen as a stimulus for the existing models in the Perodua stable, especially the Kancil.

Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd managing director Datuk Abdul Rahman Omar has forecast a sales volume of 108,000 Perodua vehicles for a 30 per cent share of the domestic vehicle market this year.

Perodua sold over 82,000 vehicles or slightly over 25 per cent of the total industry volume (TIV) of nearly 300,000 units last year which was prominently controlled by Proton.

This year, the TIV is expected to grow by more than 20 per cent to about 350,000 units.

The Kancil, Kembara four-wheel-drive vehicle and Rusa multi-utility van are Perodua's other products.

Originally set for launch last year, the Kenari - a one-litre family multi-usage mini wagon - is forecast to churn out a monthly sales volume of 1,600 to 2,000 units.

Coming in three variants, the car's price ranges from RM37,000 to RM42,000. It is available in metallic gold, purple and blue, besides the existing Perodua colours.

A total of 389 orders for the Kenari had been received since bookings were opened on June 1, Abdul Rahman said after the Press preview and test drive of the new car in Shah Alam last Saturday.

Perodua is also looking at exporting the Kenari to the UK beginning September to replace the Kancil as the car will by then no longer meet that country's stricter vehicle standards.

But Abdul Rahman quickly dismissed any notion that Perodua would phase out the Kancil, saying that the diminutive car would still be sold domestically and in certain countries.

"We will maintain the Kancil as long as the demand is there. It is our plan that the Kancil continues to be the entry-level car for Malaysians and we will try not to increase the price but slowly add more value to the model."

The UK will be the Kenari's first export market, Abdul Rahman said, adding that the company would keep export volume as low as possible "since we are facing a problem with our capacity to even cope with domestic demand."

He said since Perodua's plant in Serendah, Selangor, had reached its maximum annual capacity of 120,000 vehicles, the Kenari production or any increase of other models would have to be done at the expense of certain models.

Either the Kembara or Kancil's production would have to be slightly cut to make way for the Kenari, he noted.

Abdul Rahman said the increase in production for all Perodua vehicles would be from June next year.

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