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Waja now boasts 95pc local content

THE Proton Waja design team was headed by the company's chief executive officer, Tengku Datuk Mahaleel Tengku Ariff, and supervised by Kamarulzaman Darus, general manager of R&D, while another general manager, Muhamad Aman, acted as the project director.

Except for the powertrain - the engine and related components such as gear-box - the Waja boasts of 95 per cent local content. The car has a totally new platform (underbody structure and chassis) developed by local engineers, a result of Proton's involvement in the competitive motor industry for over 15 years.

This is unlike the existing Proton models such as the Satria, Wira and Perdana which "borrowed" platforms from Mitsubishi. Another model, the Tiara, uses the platform from Citroen. Additionally, Proton is also dependent on its foreign partners for the powertrain but the missing link will all be gone in the very near future, probably in the year 2002.

In making the challenge to Proton in April 1996 to design a Malaysian car that is affordable, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said: "You can, if you think you can".

Proton responded by initiating a programme team and concept direction two months later. Proton also set about the task by investing almost RM400 million worth of research and development facilities at its Shah Alam plant, creating one of Asia's most modern and technologically advanced R&D centres.

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