

Malaysian engines all set to roll out

SUN - 9 JUL 2001

By Bob Teoh

SHAH ALAM: The national car corporation, Proton, is all set to roll out the first Made-in-Malaysia engine which would be fitted on all Proton cars. Hot on its heels, a bigger capacity commercial engine developed by a Petronas collaboration will also be rolled out but in 2003.

Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton) CEO Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff told *SunBiz* that the new engine is designated as CamPro Lotus Proton and comes in 1.3 and 1.6 configurations.

He said the engine is developed both at Proton's K&D lab here as well as at the Lotus facility in England. Proton owns 80% of the British Lotus Group Inter-

national Ltd.

Tengku Mahaleel would not disclose more details except that it is a "very advanced engine" and that the prototype is completed.

On the cost, he said, "It is cheap compared to what other automobile majors spend on developing their-engines".

He said the CamPro engine will be rolled out "sometime in 2002".

"You have to wait for further details. We are inviting the motoring press to test drive it sometime next week," he added.

Last Thursday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave a hint of the impending roll-out of the new engine when he gave the thumbs-up after a test-drive and said, "It is a good and powerful engine especially for a 1.6 litre".

He went on to say that Proton has come a long way since its inception in 1985 and it is now capable of building its own engine.

Mahathir spent three hours at the plant, including the engine testing session and a tour of the medium volume factory purpose-built for manufacturing the Proton Waja and its R&D facility

Meanwhile, the national oil corporation, Petronas, has also confirmed that its two-litre car engine will also be ready for commercial production in the first quarter of 2003.

Its spokesman told *SunBiz* that the engine is being developed by Switzerland-based Sauber-Petronas Engineering AG (SPE), a Petronas joint venture.

He would not say whether the new engine will be for Proton.

"Your guess is as good as mine. SPE may decide to negotiate with other parties," he said.

Petronas president and chief executive, Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican, first disclosed the commercialisation of the two-litre prototype engine when he unveiled the high performance SPE prototype motor cycle racing engine at the Suzuka GP circuit in April.

He told reporters then that, "the prototype automotive engine is currently in the commercial production intent phase".

Petronas's entry into the design and development of automotive engines began with its partnership with the Swiss Sauber engineering firm when Petronas sponsored the Red Bull Sauber Petronas F1 team beginning in 1995.