

19 APR 2002
PERODUA-MARKET
LEFT-HAND DRIVE KELISA TO BE OUT BY YEAREND

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

TRIPOLI, April 19 (Bernama) --Left hand-drive Kelisa, expected to be produced by yearend, could open up new markets for Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Kedua (Perodua), the second national car maker.

"We are currently doing the necessary R&D. If everything goes as plan we hope to get the left hand-drive Kelisa available by the end of the year," said Perodua's sales executive director, Zainuddin Bahaudin.

Perodua's current left hand-drive model is only the Kancil, where it is sold in Egypt, said Zainuddin, who is a member of the business group, which form a part of the 185-member delegation accompanying Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's visit to three countries of Morocco, Libya and Bahrain.

Zainuddin is on an exploratory mission in the three countries to find new markets for Perodua.

So far, Zainuddin said he had been approached by three parties in Libya and five in Morocco interested in Kelisa.

"We are looking at exporting Kelisa into these markets. A follow-up team may be deployed to the two countries to work on this, if we find it viable," he told Bernama.

The first left hand-drive Kelisa will be exported to the Middle East countries which include Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon by the middle of this year.

However, the number of units to be exported to the Middle East has not been finalised.

The right hand-drive Kelisa had been shipped to the United Kingdom since last January.

Perodua's exclusive dealer there claimed that the present Kancil model was a hit in the small car segment (below 1.1 litre) and has been enjoying sales averaging 600 units each year.

Zainuddin said new markets for Kelisa could be developed in Morocco and Libya with right pricing.

Presently cars produced in Europe with engine capacity mostly above 1.1 litre, dominated the markets in these two countries.

Perodua has been exporting its vehicles since 99, and to date has shipped its cars to 15 countries at an average of 2,500 units per annum.

"It is still very small. What we are doing now is not to expand our markets yet but to focus and strengthen our position in the existing markets," he added. -- BERNAMA

MAD MKO KTC