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Museum-Automobile

GALLERY ON MALAYSIA'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY TO OPEN SOON

SEPANG, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- Visitors to the Formula One Circuit in Sepang can look forward to a new attraction by the end of this year - an automobile gallery.

The Department of Museums and Antiquities will open a temporary gallery there as a "prelude" to the National Automobile Museum to be built near the main entrance of the circuit.

Its Deputy Director-General, Md Redzuan Tumin, said the two-storey gallery, on loan from Sepang International Circuit, will showcase made-in-Malaysia cars and motorcycles as well as imported cars used here and chronicle the history of automotive technology in the country.

The exhibition boasts 15 cars, worth RM3.1 million, not including those on loan or contributed by Bufori, DRB-Hicom, Perodua and PROTON, and is expected to be launched by the end of the year, he said at the handover of the gallery today by the contractor, Langkawi I.D. Sdn Bhd, to the department.

Groundwork for the permanent exhibition, the brainchild of outgoing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, will begin next year.

The gallery, open free to the public, has a theatrette and will use videos and graphics to depict the automotive history.

The oldest car on exhibition is a 1904 Bushmobile, besides a 1923 Ford Speedster, a 1934 Alvis Firefly and a 1949 MG TD.

Curator Darniza Daut Mohmud said the first cars were on the road in Malaya in the 1870s.

Malaysia began its national car project in 1982 to develop the heavy industry and stimulate economic growth.

Until then, Malaysia only had an industrial area where foreign companies assembled their cars.

The first foreign cars were assembled here in 1968 by Swedish Motor Assemblies Sdn. Bhd.

The first national car, the Proton Saga, rolled off the assembly line on July 9, 1985.

Today, Malaysia produces a range of models of cars, trucks and motorcycles for the local and international markets.

-- BERNAMA

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