

19 AUG 2003

PROTON-SYRIA

WAJA WILL BE A HIT AMONG SYRIAN CAR ENTHUSIASTS

By: Mokhtar Hussain

DAMASCUS, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton) is confident of further penetrating the competitive Syrian market especially with its Waja models which it believes would be a hit among the young car enthusiasts.

Proton chief executive officer, Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff said the national carmaker was now set to expand in a big way as it now had the technology to develop top class engines.

"Based on discussions with our Syrian partner, we also see great potential in the Arena models here," he told a news conference at the new Proton showroom in Hasrata near here which was officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, during his two-day visit to Syria.

Last year, Syria imported 600 Proton Wajas and about 100 Perodua cars.

While here, Dr Mahathir had witnessed the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Proton and Modern Technology Trading (MTT) of Syria on the development of small-scale industries in Syria.

"The MOU is not only for the distribution of Proton cars in the country but for a bigger scope of industrial programme which involved the transfer of technology," Tengku Mahaleel said.

He explained that the programme would need high-level commitment between the two governments as it would involve the setting up of vendors for car components.

"There will be a spin-off from the programme as it will provide tremendous job opportunities in Syria and more importantly the transfer of technology," he said. -- BERNAMA

MOK KTC