



They have to stay competitive, says PM

NST - 24/3/2006

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“We are not just confining Proton to the Malaysian market. Proton must grow big, Proton must be competitive and the present management is committed to achieving this.”

KUALA LUMPUR: A Proton Waja for less than RM57,800, or an Iswara for under RM37,350?

This is going to be inevitable because Proton, the national carmaker, will now have no choice but to face the competition following the Government's decision to cut duties and tariffs on motor vehicles under the new National Automotive Policy (NAP).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made this clear yesterday, saying the prices of Proton cars would inevitably be reduced because it had to compete and price its products acceptably to the market.

“This is extremely important. It is up to the management (of Proton) to decide what the prices are going to be.

“Competition is the challenge that Proton must face. It can't run

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PM: Proton has no problems with NAP

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away from that,” he said, adding that lower prices for all cars would also include Perodua and certain foreign makes, except 4WDs, MPVs and fully imported vehicles.

Proton now sells several models ranging from under RM40,000, such as the Iswara, to the Perdana V6 at about RM106,888.

Speaking to reporters after launching the Islamic Development Bank's Vision 1440 Hijrah document here yesterday, Abdullah said Proton's management had told him the company did not have problems with the NAP.

He added that the management believed they were ready to compete and would embark on the export of Proton vehicles overseas.

The Government would also help Proton by promoting its cars in foreign countries, Abdullah said.

“We are not confining Proton to the Malaysian market. Proton must grow big, Proton must be competitive and the present management is committed to achieving this.”

Abdullah said the capacity for Proton in the local market was too small and it must find room to im-

prove, particularly in exporting its cars overseas.

“I am proud at Proton's response on this matter.”

The Prime Minister said that while prices of completely knocked down (CKD) cars would also go down, the Government would make sure they were of high quality by satisfying the set conditions.