

DATE: 19 / 1 / 2008

# PM: New models will help Proton

The Star - 19/1/2008

## National carmaker must also grow its export market, says Pak Lah

By **AUDREY EDWARDS**  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Proton, the national car company, needs to continue to develop new models to increase its competitiveness, not only in the domestic market but also internationally.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the automotive industry was operating in an increasingly challenging environment.

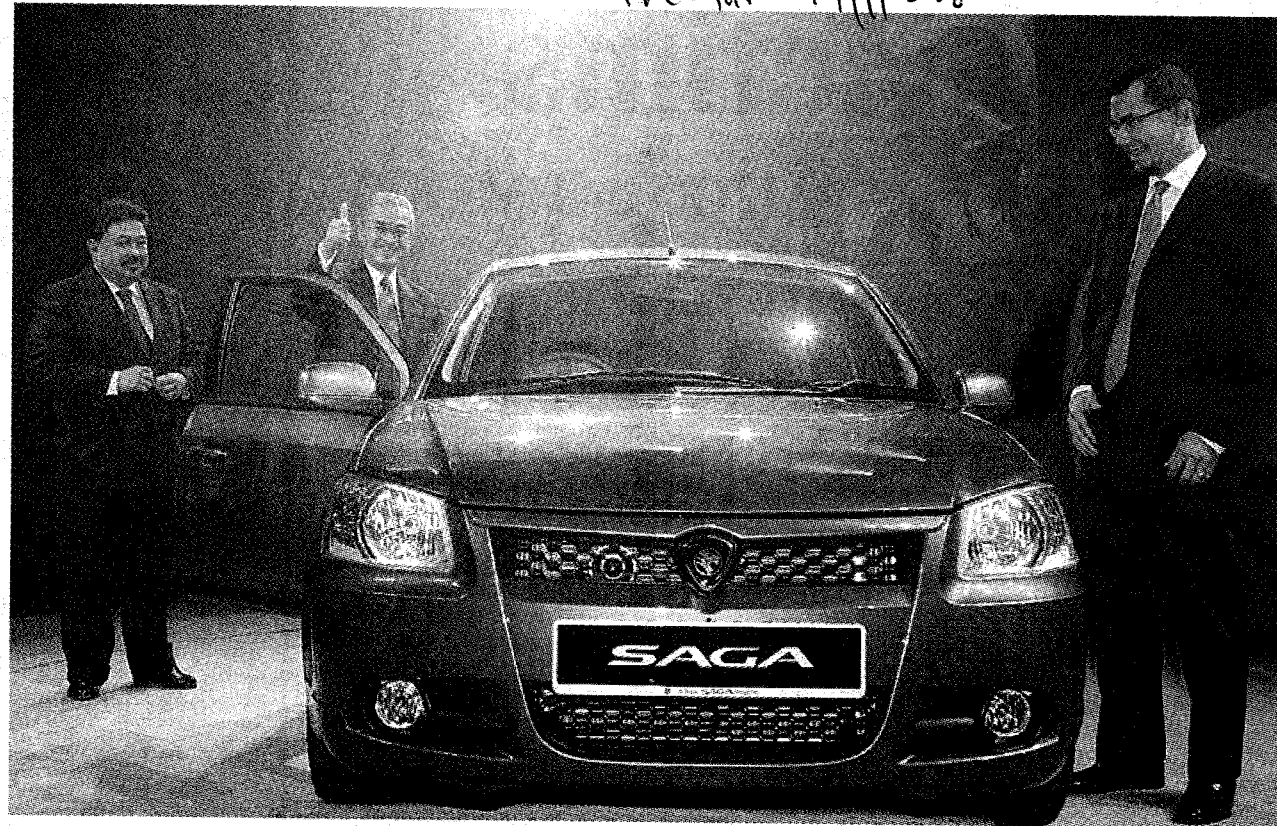
"The dynamics and landscape have changed with the global automotive industry going through a consolidation phase, dictated by the need for greater economies of scale for survival and sustainability," he said yesterday when launching the new Proton Saga.

"Moreover, the increasing forces of liberalisation – such as the Asean Free Trade Area stipulations – are also exerting greater competitive pressures on all manufacturers."

The development of new models, he added, would enable Proton to achieve more optimal economies of scale and fulfil the ever-changing expectations of customers.

"Malaysia is a relatively small market. Thus it is imperative for us to grow our export markets in a strategic and innovative manner," he said.

He noted that Proton had taken "concrete



**It's good:** Abdullah giving the thumbs-up after launching the new Proton Saga at the KL Convention Centre yesterday. Looking on are (left) Proton Holdings Bhd chairman Datuk Mohamed Azlan Hashim and Proton Holdings Bhd managing director Datuk Syed Zainal Abidin Syed Mohamed Tahir.

steps" to reorganise and restructure its operations to become more competitive and efficient in responding to increasingly intense and open competition.

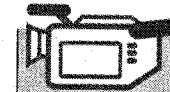
On the new Proton Saga, Abdullah said Proton had come "full circle" with the new model some 23 years after the original was launched.

Expressing his confidence that it would live up to the standard and expectation set by the

Saga, Abdullah said it would become the "people's car" and the pride and joy of the public.

"This new model is tipped to go to even greater heights, as it was developed with not only the domestic market in mind but also the export market," he said.

Noting that Proton had started with profits but was later hit by "pain and shame" with financial losses, Abdullah said that the new age of success and triumph had begun.



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The Saga continues...