

## LAUNCH OF HYBRID X90

# PM: Fully electric vehicle by Proton will boost local take-up

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Proton Holdings Bhd's introduction of a fully electric vehicle (EV) by 2025 will hopefully encourage higher EV ownership in Malaysia and spur domestic market growth.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said a strong EV presence by Proton will inspire people's confidence in the capability of EVs for daily use.

"Being a national car manufacturer, Proton must grow rapidly and continue to embrace the inclusiveness of the local ecosystem.

"This must encompass design and engineering programmes, local vendor development programmes, continuous improvement in local content from Malaysian vendors, enhancements in local manufacturing capacity, sales and service network, as well as strategic initiatives towards improving automotive technical capabilities of Malaysians," he said at the company's 40th anniversary celebration yesterday.

Proton Holdings Bhd deputy chief executive officer Roslan Ab-

dullah recently said it may accelerate the introduction of EVs to as early as 2025 – two years earlier than initially projected.

Anwar said Proton must reclaim its position as the country's top automotive company and make Malaysia a hub for exports.

He also thanked former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who oversaw the birth of the national car maker, for his contributions to the company.

"Modern Malaysia runs in tandem with the development of Proton. The automotive industry has great potential not only in Malaysia, but also in Asean.

"The unity government also thanks Dr Mahathir for his contribution and role in the sector."

Anwar also urged state and local governments to implement more investor-friendly measures.

He cited the Automotive High-Tech Valley (AHTV) in Tanjung Malim, Perak, as an example, saying the collaboration between Geely Holdings and DRB-Hicom, as well as the research and development there would encour-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the launch of the Proton X90 at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him are Geely Holding Group chairman Eric Li Shufu (third from right) and DRB-Hicom Berhad chairman Tan Sri Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariff (fifth from right). PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

age more automotive companies to set up facilities in Malaysia.

"I expect the realisation of the AHTV as soon as possible. This will attract high-technology manufacturing, high value-added activities and complex products."

Anwar said he would discuss the matter with Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad on making Tanjung Malim an automotive focal point for the region.

The government, he added, would engage with more Chinese

companies to draw investments in the automotive sector.

During Anwar's recent visit to China, Malaysia received its highest investment commitment in history – RM170 billion – from Chinese investors following the signing of 19 memoranda of understanding between Malaysian and Chinese companies.

Proton's anniversary celebration also saw the launch its first mild-hybrid electric vehicle (MHEV) model, the X90, marking the brand's entry into the new energy vehicle market.

The X90 is the national automaker's third sports utility vehicle in the X series line-up, priced from RM123,800 to RM152,800.

All X90 models run on the new mild-hybrid setup, which pairs a 48V Electric Motor Synergy System with the 1.5L TGD engine and a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission.

The X90 also features three new class safety systems, comprising rear collision warning, traffic sign information and rear cross traffic alert.