

**Perodua Ready To Collaborate With Proton, Says MD
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By Prem Kumar Panjamothy**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 25 (Bernama) -- Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) is still open to collaboration talks with DRB-Hicom Bhd, the new owner of national car maker Proton Holdings Bhd, managing director Datuk Aminar Rashid Salleh said.

However, he reiterated that the country's largest car maker is still against any kind of merger between the two entities.

Aminar Rashid said there was a proposal for the two national auto makers to merge, but after it was rejected by both Proton and Perodua the Ministry of International Trade and Industry came up with several areas of strategic collaboration.

"Since it will benefit both parties, we said okay. This was with the old Proton management. But after the recent developments, DRB-Hicom has not yet approached us.

"If there are opportunities for us to move from that suggestion, we are open for discussion.

"That would benefit both parties as well as the local automotive industry. But we are still against a merger," he told Bernama in an interview.

Aminar Rashid said it is up to the new owners to decide whether there is a need for a strategic collaboration.

Perodua, which sold 180,000 passenger cars last year and defended the number one position in terms of sales in the country, aims to boost sales to 188,000 this year.

For January and February this year, the second national car company sold 13,684 and 15,097 car units respectively.

"The service intake was 140,000 units for January and 280,000 units in February. This means Perodua customers are still relying on us for the car's service.

"Spare parts sales for the period were RM16.9 million in January and RM17.3 million last month," he said.

Moving forward, Aminar Rashid said the company intends to woo back its after-warranty customers to boost its spare parts and car service business.

"Only half of our customers are coming back to Perodua service outlets after their warranty ends.

"We are looking to start a new campaign called 'Flexi Bijak' and launch our second brand of spare parts, which will be very similar to the original but with some of the specifications like lifespan changed.

"This will make the prices more affordable," he said.

He added that Perodua will also be reintroducing its used-car business, which ceased operations two years ago, in the second half of 2012.

He said the company is in the process of recruiting the right people to start the used-car operations.

"The replacement market is on the upswing, the same goes for the demand for second-hand Perodua cars.

"Quite a number of old Perodua car users want to change to a newer version Perodua car, and at these used-car centres, they can find the best second-hand value as well as a network to purchase another new or second-hand Perodua car.

"Perodua is planning to set up operation centres in big cities in the country, while maintaining the resale value of our cars," he said.

The used-car centres, he said, will take in any brand of cars but will only sell used Perodua cars.

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