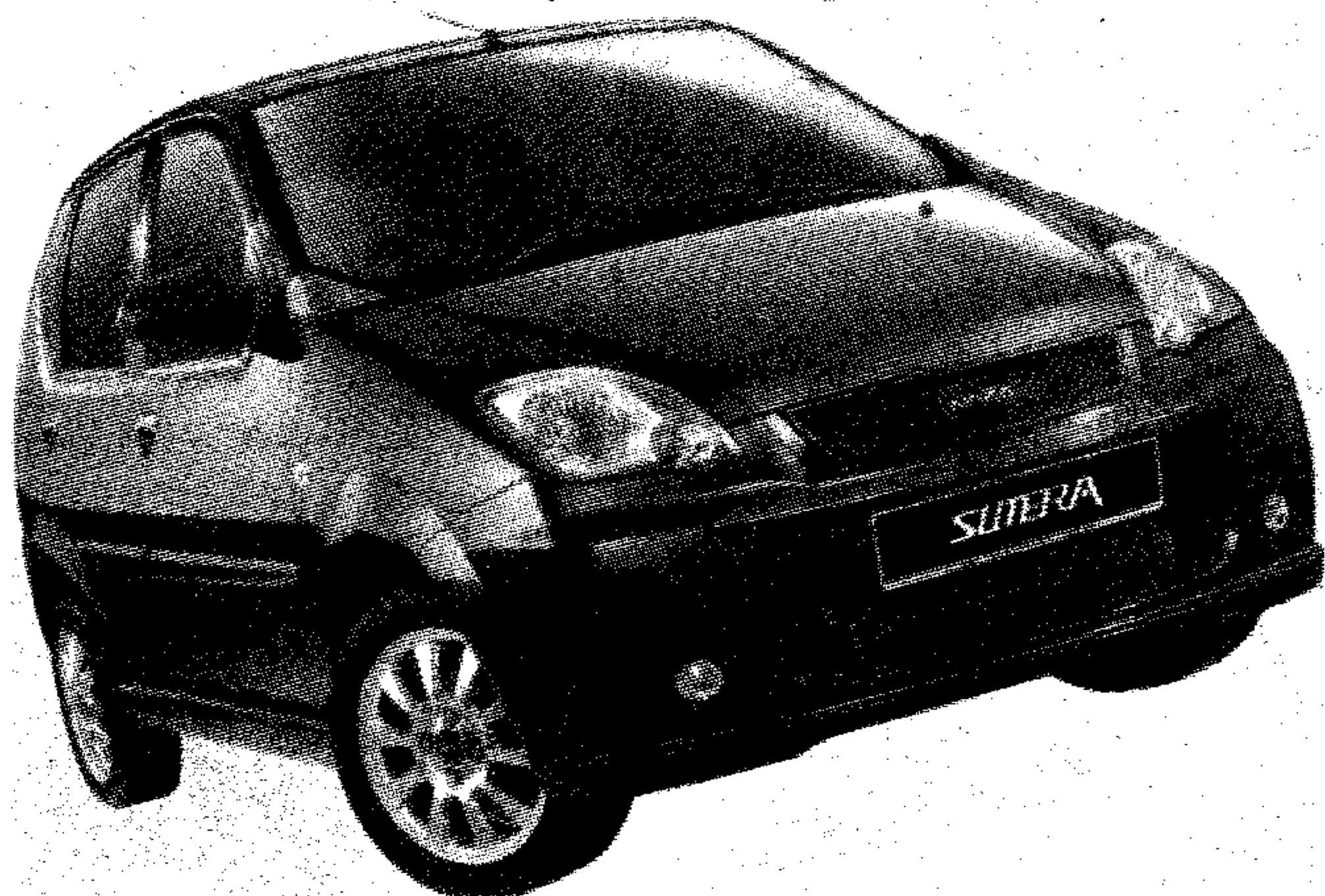
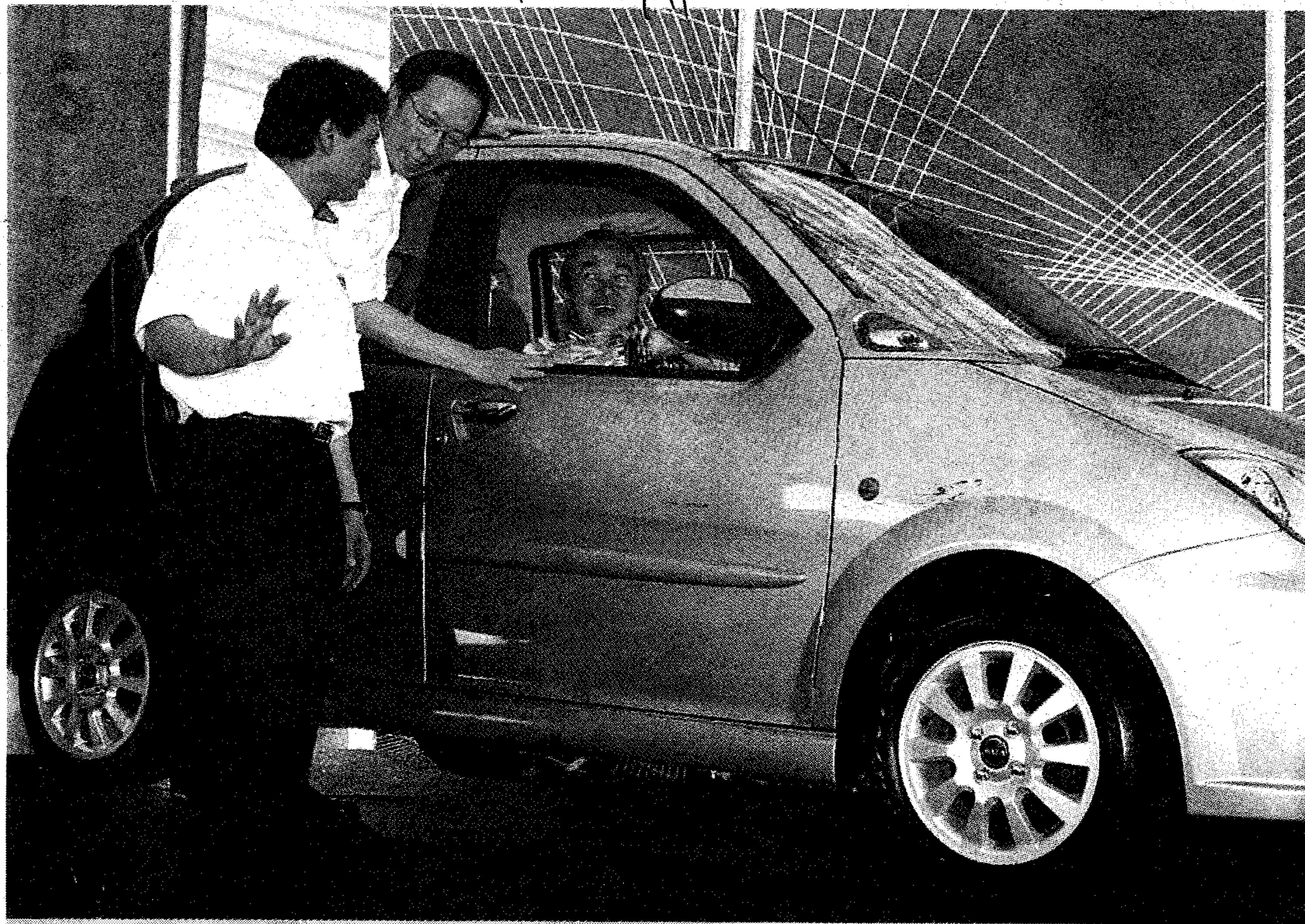
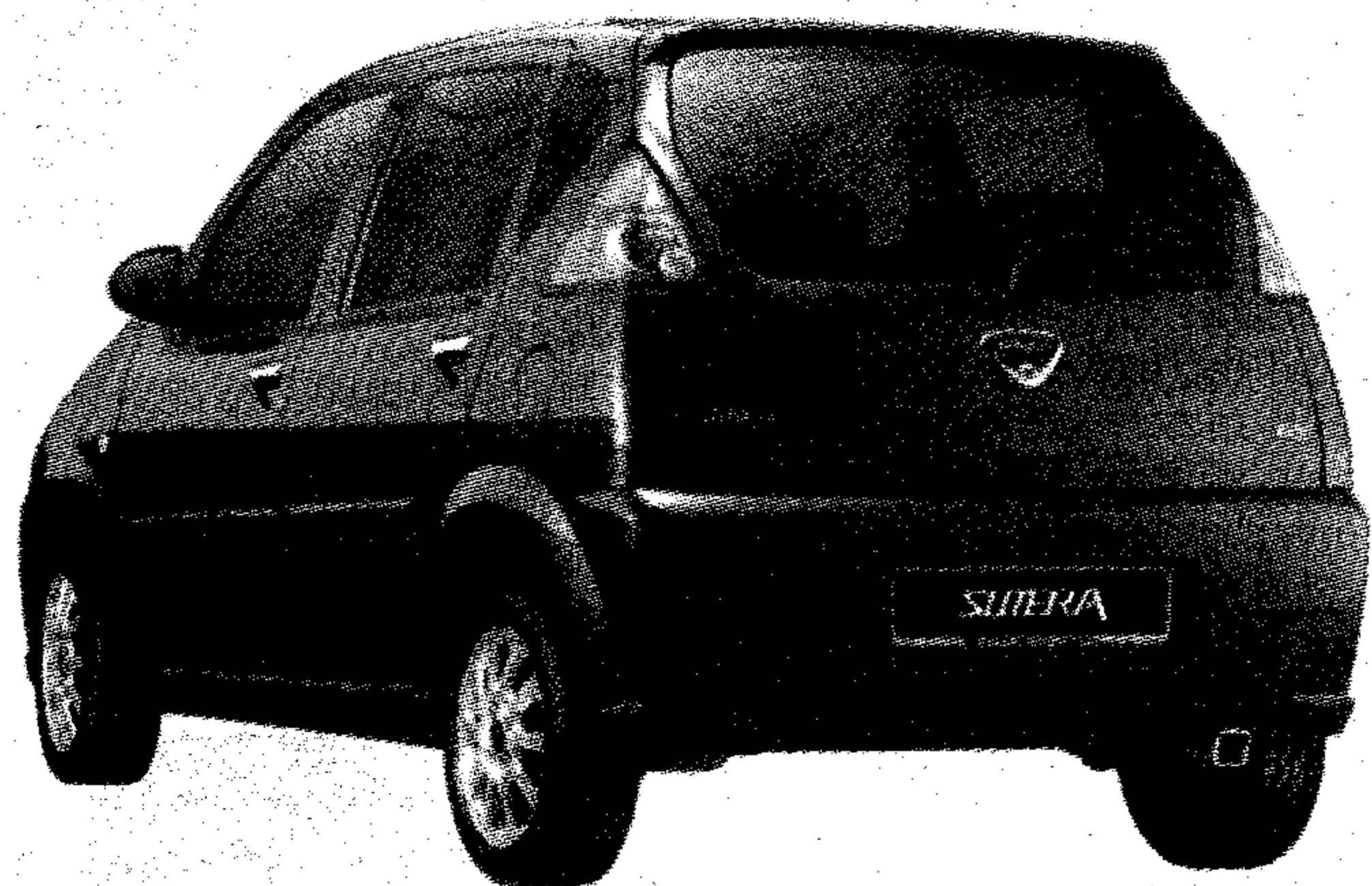


Pak Lah: Compete like brothers

NST - 23/4/2006



COMPACT WHEELS: The front and rear views of the newly launched 1.1-litre Naza Sutera that sells for RM35,900.



GETTING A FEEL: Abdullah checking out the interior of the Naza Sutera during its launch in Bertam, Kepala Batas, yesterday. With him are Nasimuddin (left) and Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

KEPALA BATAS: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi advised local car manufacturers Naza and Proton to compete like "brothers" to make their mark on the international market.

The Prime Minister said he would not be jealous if Naza performed better than Proton.

"But I will be angry with Proton if they cannot be the best car maker," he said, reiterating that the two manufacturers must embark on a brotherly competition.

Abdullah said this during the ground-breaking ceremony at Naza's new plant on a 102ha plot in Bertam. He also launched Naza's new model Sutera. The 1.1-litre Sutera is selling for RM35,900.

Abdullah said the National Automotive Policy was formulated to position countries in South-East Asia as the largest supplier of cars and car parts for the global market.

"This region will be the largest car manufacturing and car parts hub," he said.

In view of the huge potential in the car manufacturing industry, Abdullah called on local car manufacturers and car parts makers to have strategic cooperation to increase production capacity.

"We must have confidence and must not be afraid to compete in the international market. We should not be like some of our forefathers who were even afraid to seek independence.

"We have the human capital, knowledge, experience and expertise. We also have the capability to produce the best cars.

"We should not be afraid to compete with giant car manufacturers from South Korea and Japan," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysian car manufacturers should not fear hurdles.

"If we are afraid of challenges, we cannot become a developed nation," he said, calling on fellow countrymen to adopt hardworking and resilient attitudes.

Abdullah said Naza would be able to increase the number of skilled personnel with the plan to build its largest manufacturing plant by next year.

Meanwhile, Naza Group of Companies chief executive officer Tan Sri SM Nasimuddin SM Amin said the company was already heading towards the direction advocated by the Prime Minister.

"When it is fully completed in 2008, the plant will increase annual production capacity by 100,000 cars," he said, adding that currently the plant in Pekan, Pahang, produced 30,000 units a year.

He said Naza had also allocated 100ha of land for vendors to set up their factories.

"We are investing RM570mil for the first phase of the Bertam plant. We also expect our vendors to invest about RM180mil to set up factories near our plant," he said.

Apart from the plants in Bertam and Pekan, Naza also has another plant in Gurun.