

By : DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB TUN ABD RAZAK
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Title : LAUNCH OF THE CCB AUTOHAUS: MERCEDES BENZ AUTOHAUS

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, Chairman of Cycle and Carriage Bintang Berhad

Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Utama Hj Mohd Hj Hasan, former Managing Director of Cycle & Carriage Bintang Berhad

Dr. Rainer Thiel, President & CEO, DaimlerChrysler South East Asia

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Frank Steinleitner, President and CEO of DaimlerChrysler Malaysia Berhad

Mr Steven Foster, Managing Director of Cycle & Carriage Bintang Berhad

Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good afternoon.

1. First of all allow me to express my thanks Cycle and Carriage Bintang (CCB) and DaimlerChrysler Malaysia for inviting me to be a part of this special occasion. I am delighted to have been asked to launch what I am told is the largest Mercedes Benz Autohaus showroom in Malaysia for Mercedes Benz and the Smart Cars. The establishment of this showroom and one stop center for users of Mercedes Benz and smart cars is a welcome development as the Mercedes marque has long been embraced by Malaysians and is a household name recognized as a symbol of success and prosperity. In addition, the prominent position of the building and its unique design is certain to make it a brand new landmark for Petaling Jaya, one which will be talked about and referred to by Klang Valley residents for many years to come. I congratulate CCB and DaimlerChrysler Malaysia on the establishment of this brand new center.

2. In line with the elite and high-end image of the Mercedes Benz marque, I am confident that the Mercedes Benz Autohaus experience will be one that provides Mercedes-Benz customers with "an enhanced emotional retail experience", uplifting the retail standard of the entire automotive industry. I would like to commend Cycle and Carriage Bintang and DaimlerChrysler for taking the lead to transform the entire Mercedes Benz retail network, presenting a world class retail experience right here in Malaysia.

3. The launch of the largest Autohaus in Malaysia by CCB is yet another milestone for a company with a long track record and with many firsts in the automotive industry. Cycle and Carriage Bintang Berhad has been associated with the auto industry and with the Mercedes Benz brand for over 5 decades and has very successfully kept the business leaders of Malaysia moving over the years. I understand that CCB, as one of the pioneers in the assembly business in Malaysia has assembled 35,000 Mercedes

Benz cars ever since the start of the CKD programme and over the last 55 years has sold over 100,000 Mercedes Benz vehicles.

4. Clearly they have established benchmarks and standards for the automotive industry in Malaysia and have contributed towards the economic and socio-economic development of the country.

5. Admirably, ladies and gentlemen, CCB has not rested on its laurels. The launch of the largest Mercedes Benz Autohaus and their total investment of RM55 million in setting up six Autohaus centers in Malaysia demonstrate the company's continued commitment to be a step ahead in pleasing and delighting a highly discerning group of customers. This is an important aspect of the retail business. Customer satisfaction is crucial in retaining brand awareness among consumers. This move by CCB to establish the one stop center in the form of the Autohaus is a demonstration of customer friendliness and evidence that the company places customer satisfaction at the top of its list of priorities.

6. In addition, this move will hopefully stimulate other companies to look into their own aspect of customer service and encourage them to take similar steps in improving their facilities and services, in order to compete in this business. This competitive spirit amongst players in the auto industry will further accelerate the pace of development and progress of the local automotive industry to be in line with the highest international standards.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. The automotive industry is an exciting and growing sector, which we recognise as an agent of change in our effort to build a stronger, more dynamic and more progressive Malaysia. We are pleased that this sector has been very robust in spite of the various challenges we face, not the least of which is a somewhat uncertain global economic climate.

8. One of the outward manifestations of the country's progress and wealth is the increase in vehicle ownerships. Today Malaysia is the largest passenger car market in South East Asia and this year the total industry vehicle volume forecasted at 520,000 will probably be surpassed. The continued growth in this sector represents a very optimistic economic outlook for Malaysia, and we are hopeful that this positive trend will continue in the coming years.

9. With strong Government commitment, we have now a fairly strong automotive industry. Besides the national car projects, we have most of the well-known marques being assembled here. We are witnessing an increasing number of international carmakers setting up assembly bases here, and we look forward to welcome even more investors into Malaysia's automotive industry.

10. This is a wonderful boost to our economy as it is centred on and around two key areas for development which is the transfer of technology and also the development of supporting SMEs. Given time, I am sure that with the continued support of the government as well as the participation of major names such as Daimler Chrysler, Malaysia would be able to establish itself as a serious player in the regional automotive scene.

11. In the case of DaimlerChrysler Malaysia, I had the pleasure of officially opening

their Pekan assembly plant recently where they have invested more than RM100 million, making them the biggest European assembler in Malaysia. Such investments not only serve as a catalyst for accelerated development in the community, but also boost Malaysia's appeal and reputation as a perfect destination for investments in this industry. I am most pleased with DaimlerChrysler's confidence in Malaysia and hope that others will emulate DCM's success story in this country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. Complacency is a word that should not exist in the Malaysian context. We must seek to continuously improve. In the automotive industry, to stay ahead, we must strive to always provide outstanding automotive technology, styling and service and I am glad to say that we are able draw a fine example from both Cycle and Carriage Bintang and DaimlerChrysler, especially with respect to the training and development of their workers.

13. I understand that CCB has implemented its Apprentice Training Programme since the 1970s to provide countless young engineers with careers in the motor industry, and spawned many entrepreneurs who have developed their own businesses in this sector, having gained experience and knowledge from their exposure with CCB.

14. I am pleased to note that apart from the purely business aspect of the operations CCB and Daimler Chrysler have paid close attention to giving skills training and work exposure to their workers. In the long run, this serves Malaysia well as we will have more and more highly skilled labour in the industry. I hope to see all corporations and players in this industry looking into aspects of training and development for their employees. Over time, not only will this create a larger pool of talent from which the industry can draw its workers, but it will most certainly contribute to a stronger and more resilient automotive industry in Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

15. This facility that I take pleasure in opening today is a strong commitment to the future of Malaysia and to the Automotive Industry. This is an industry that is important to us and the government is determined to do everything possible to enhance it. The upcoming National Automotive Policy, will, I am confident, underpin investments like this and give confidence to automobile manufacturers to view Malaysia as a strong potential destination in which to establish a solid regional base. At the end of the day, what we all aspire to see is a Malaysia with a strong automotive sector, ready and able to compete on a global level. I believe we are on the right track. If we stay the course, there is no doubt in my mind that we can achieve all that we have set out to do.

16. Once again I would like to thank the Directors and staff of Cycle and Carriage Bintang for inviting me to open this new dealership in Petaling Jaya and I wish the Company continued success and prosperity for many years to come. Having said that, it gives me great pleasure now to officially open this Cycle and Carriage Bintang Autohaus.

Thank you.