

Ufuk Sandık

"50 years later after the first domestic car of Turkey, "Devrim", the second try is coming from Jan and Claude, the sons of the legendary manager of Otosan Bernar Nahum; the 100% domestic car hits the showroom in October"

The sons of Bernar Nahum, one of the leading names of the Turkish automotive industry, Jan and Claude are realizing the Turkish-Made car they have dreamed of in the younger years 34 years later. After failing to obtain the approval of their father, a close colleague of Vehbi Koç and the Automotive Chairman of the Group, the Nahum brothers are realizing their dream with Karsan this time. While the Turkish-made vehicle that they have developed in Karsan, in which İnan Kırac owns the majority of the shares, enters the New York taxi tender, it will also be displayed in the Istanbul Auto-Show Fair in October.

Jan Nahum, delegated member of Karsan, who talked during the ceremony organized for the New York Taxi Project said that the future of Turkey depended on creating its own brand name. "This is not a romantic expectation. It is a jump we have to make" said Nahum. Pointing out that the added value of a domestic car was three times more than that of a vehicle manufactured for another brand, Nahum told the following: " If the automotive (sector) does not assume this responsibility, no other sector can. Producing 1.5 million vehicles 2010, the production of the Turkish automotive sector is planned to increase to 5 million vehicles in 2025. That is, one out of each 4 cars produced in Europe will be manufactured in Turkey. Would Europe and the world permit this under these conditions? Naturally no. We need to achieve this target with our own brands."

Stating that they had taken an important step on the way to becoming a brand with the New York project, "We saw that there is no specific segment for the taxi cabs. The taxi cabs are produced out of the existing vehicles all around the world. We saw the tender for the taxis as an opportunity for branding and creating our own model" said Nahum.

The New York Taxi will be produced for 150 million Dollars.

Jan Nahum said that if the Project "Taxi of the Future" developed by the Hexagon Studio, a joint venture of the Karsan, Kıraca and Hexagon Group of Companies, wins the Tender in New York for 26.650 taxi cabs, the production would start with a 150 million-Dollar investment in the next year. Nahum noted that, even if the New York tender did not exist, they would produce for the other mega-cities.

"The father did not approve, Citroen produced for 12 years".

Claude Nahum, a member of the Karsan Board of Directors, told the following regarding the "Çağdaş" project: "We developed a family-type car in 1976. Jan, heading the R&D group in those years developed the design of the vehicle and I developed the 107 HP Wankel engine for the vehicle. Then we produced a prototype of the vehicle. Our father Bernard Nahum Said that "the vehicle was not suitable for the Turkish people". The "Çağdaş" project was terminated at that moment. And when we asked the Otosan management "what will happen now", they told us to " to drink a glass of water over it".

"Çağdaş" was displayed by the company Reliant, which manufactured the prototype, with some minor changes in the Birmingham Auto Show in 1980. The vehicle was purchased by Citroen and produced as the model BX. It became the best selling car of Citroen during the 12 years of production.

"IF DOĞAN WOULD BE PRODUCED, IT WOULD SELL EVEN TODAY"

Telling the he was criticized for producing the bird series, Kırac said the following: " You produce the older vehicles and get branded as assemblers. Both were true, but we had no other chance. If you produce 20.000 pieces a year, you have to prolong the model years. But they served the Turkish society well. If the bird series would be produced again today, it would sell both in the country and abroad".

"The Connect will be manufactured in Mexico. We are the only Turks entering the Tender"

Stating that they were the owners of the only Turkish-made vehicle that entered the New York Taxi tender, Jan Nahum said the following: "The transit connect, which Ford entered the tender with, will not be manufactured in Gölcük. Ford told the NY Mayor that they would produce the vehicle in Mexico for the US. We have no other Turkish make against us".

"I AM ON STANDBY IN MY BUSINESS LIFE. I AM ATTACHED TO SUNA WITH A PASSION"

İnan Kırac, who bought the majority shares of Karsan after retiring from KOÇ Holding, said: "I am living the happiness of creating a brand name, which had stayed in me as a yearning while I was with the Koç Group, with the Nahum brothers." Kırac went on to say: "There are some people, who can see far. And some people can see the horizon. Suna Kırac was such a person that she could see even beyond the horizon. I was always fascinated by her. Therefore, I am spending most of my time with her in the recent years. I am still attached to her with a passion. But, I am naturally on standby in my business life for that reason. However, those two brothers (Nahum) did whatever it took to mobilize and excite me again. I am living the excitement of realizing the branding that we could not do in the KOÇ Group, or rather when I was a director.

PEUGEOT WANTED TO BECOME A PARTNER

Reminding the regret of Peugeot for the J9, the intellectual right of which it had sold some 4-5 years ago, thinking that it would not sell, Kiraç went on: "They wanted to become partners again a short time ago. We did not accept. We saw the future of the Turkish automotive sector in branding. If someone does not come forward and make this move, this sector cannot reach the point aimed in 10-15 years from now. Only however, if some independent party like us comes forward and creates a brand name, the others will follow".

"The history does not forget, even if some people may forget"

"I am working with the best managers trained in Koç Holding. I am proud of saying that. If automotive has reached a place in Koç Holding today, these people have a great share of effort in it. The past should not be forgotten. The values should be preserved. The history does not forget, even if Koç Holding may forget. I am really sorry for this issue".

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