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## Sarao won't stop making jeepneys

By ROBERTZON RAMIREZ

Despite government efforts to phase out old jeepneys, the country's pioneer jeepney manufacturer, Sarao, will continue to produce the iconic vehicles known as the "king of the road."

Ed Sarao of Sarao Motors Inc., located in

Las Piñas, said they are ready to adapt to the jeepney modernization program by tying up with other private companies rather than stop production.

"It is also a good sign because the (new)

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generation of Sarao, they have more plans on modernization, but we will remain the iconic jeepneys because that's where we got known for," Sarao told reporters and bloggers during a tour with the Department of Tourism (DOT).

In fact, Sarao said they already have three prototypes of modern jeepneys: a zero emission unit, which means chargeable jeepneys; Euro 4 compliant jeepney and a bigger one produced by his son for his thesis.

He stressed they will definitely

produce modern jeepneys should there be a positive response from the public on the jeepney modernization program.

Sarao, however, said their prototypes are three times higher than the price of the old jeepneys, which ranges from P1.5 million to P2 million depending on the design and features. The old jeepney costs only around P700,000 to P800,000.

Sarao admitted the jeepney modernization program has an effect on their operations as their clients have started to stop ordering units while waiting for the government's

final decision on the jeepney phase out.

"We still have orders from the provinces, especially those who are using it for farm land, transporting goods and other business," Sarao said.

The Sarao family produced the jeepney-inspired vehicle of Pope John Paul II - the popemobile - during his visit to the Philippines in February 1981.

\*TRANSPORTATION