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MCRIA TO PRODUCE FIRST MADE-IN-MALAYSIA INDUSTRIAL ROBOTS

SERI ISKANDAR, July 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia Centre For Robotics and Industrial Automation (Mcria) has initiated a project to manufacture the first Made-in-Malaysia industrial robots by 1998.

Its director, Dr Roslizar Mat Ali said, the cost-effective industrial robots would be targeted for export and the local markets, particularly the Malaysian automotive industries and Small and Medium scale Industries (SMIs), where the needs for automation were growing rapidly.

Mcria Resources Sdn Bhd, backed by Gopeng Bhd, had selected Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) to start a local manufacturing plant - Robocity - in Tanjung Malim, he said in a statement here today.

ABB of Sweden is the world's largest robot manufacturer. ABB is a global conglomerate with more than 1,000 companies and subsidiaries throughout the world and the company's robots and robotics software are noted for their versatility and reliability.

Established at the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)'s Perak branch campus here in May last year, Mcria, the first of its kind high tech centre in Malaysia, is a joint venture between Yayasan Perak, Perak State Development Corporation, Gopeng Bhd, USM and a few other companies including Compera Sdn Bhd.

Mcria will facilitate technical training in robotics and advanced industrial automation for Malaysian scientists, engineers and technicians to meet the country's needs for skilled manpower and human resources.

The centre was set up to provide hands-on-training robots, promoting research and development (R&D), systems design and integration and consultancy and establishing strategic alliances, industrial linkages and international collaboration.

Dr Roslizar said, Mcria had completed plans for creating the 160 hectare Robocity within a 3,380 ha development to complement and spur the growth of the Proton City and various high tech industries in the area.

He said, Robocity was aimed at establishing Malaysia, particularly Perak and the northern region of Malaysia, as a major high tech manufacturing region in Asia-Pacific.

Mcria Resources Sdn Bhd is the leading company of Robocity, a comprehensive industrial high tech park to meet the needs of businesses, industries, government agencies and other high tech parks and centres in Malaysia, Asean and the Asia Pacific region, he said.

Dr Roslizar said the project, initiated eight months ago, would among other things, manufacture robotics and advanced automation systems in Malaysia and achieving effective and veritable technology transfer to Malaysia through technology absorption, adaptation and re-engineering.

He said, the joint venture was in tandem with the Seventh Malaysia Plan which emphasised on developing technology-intensive industries including robotics and advanced automation.

In line with the Seventh Malaysia Plan, Dr Roslizar said, Mcria was actively creating a national agenda to help Malaysia accomplish its objectives of eventually acquiring the necessary technology to produce a 100 per cent Malaysian product with a Malaysian brandname.

"Mcria-ABB would fulfill the first step of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's vision - first we buy robots, then we learn how to produce robots, after that we make the robots to make other robots", said Dr Roslizar.

Mcria, he added, also urged the Federal Government to take advantage of Mcria's initiatives and utilise Mcria's cost-effective programmes as part of Malaysia's own Seventh Malaysia Plan Agenda.-- BERNAMA

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