

17/01/1997

Firm awaits govt nod to set up sports car plant

Kamarul Yunus

DESPITE the tremendous publicity given to Delfino - the locally-developed sports car - during the Langkawi International Motor Show (Limos '96) in December, its owner has yet to be given the approval to set up its local manufacturing plant in Malaysia.

Arni (M) Sdn Bhd managing director Arjunaidy Mohd Noor Ariffin said the company submitted the proposal to the International Trade and Industry Ministry quite a long time ago but there has yet to be any positive response from the ministry.

"We will meet officers from the ministry and the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority next week to sort out problems pertaining to our application," he told Business Times in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Arjunaidy said so far, the company only received the ministry's acknowledgement of receiving his proposal to set up a plant to manufacture the Delfino IQ140.

"There was no follow-up to this, not even details on the steps and procedures that we need to follow," he added.

Initially, the company hoped to start constructing the proposed plant early this year.

"Without the ministry's approval, we cannot start work and this may hamper our projection. We would really appreciate it if the Government can speed up processing our application.

"This will enable us to deliver the sports car on time to our customers who have already placed their bookings during the nine-day Limos '96," he added.

The company received more than 100 bookings and enquiries during the nine-day Limos '96. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who officiated the opening of Limos '96, also launched the Delfino.

"We hope the Government will give the approval soon so that we can start constructing our factory by this year. We have set a target to complete the plant, proposed to be located near Port Klang, by the first quarter of next year," Arjunaidy said.

At present, the Delfino is being manufactured in the UK by Minari Engineering Ltd, a 50 per cent Malaysian-owned and 50 per cent British-owned company.

To promote Delfino internationally, Arjunaidy said Arni plans to participate in several international motor shows this year.

"We have sent letters to several organisers of the international motor shows to provide us with detail of their schedules and programmes.

"So far, we have yet to confirm which motor shows that we will participate in because the organisers have yet to get back to us," he said, adding that the company is looking at motor shows in Japan, Frankfurt, Birmingham and probably Geneva.

Besides the Delfino IQ140, Arjunaidy said the company also plans to exhibit a new model at several of the motor shows.

"We cannot just display the Delfino IQ140 at the show. We've got to have a variety of models of our sports car," he added.

On the Detroit Motor Show, Arjunaidy said the organiser of the show had rejected Arni's application to participate as they (organiser) want to limit the number of participants.

"Since we are a newcomer, the organiser turned down our application. This was notified to us a few days before the show started last week," he

added. Earlier news report said Arni plans to exhibit the Delfino IQ140 at the Detroit Motor Show to penetrate into the US market.

(END)