

15 JUL 1997

Trucks

FIRST MALAYSIAN-MADE TRUCK TO BE LAUNCHED IN OCTOBER

PEKAN, July 15 (Bernama) -- The first Malaysian-made truck, to be produced by Malaysian Truck and Bus Sdn Bhd (MTB) here, is scheduled to be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 18.

DRB-Hicom Group executive chairman Datuk Saleh Sulong said that the Prime Minister's Department confirmed the date of the launching recently.

He was speaking to reporters after the ceremony to hand over the Petronas Welding Technology workshop to the Pekan Mara Vocational Institute (IKM) and to mark its change of name to IKM Tan Sri Yahaya Ahmad.

Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapha Mohamed officiated at the ceremony.

MTB is a joint-venture company comprising Hicom Holdings Bhd, Diversified Resources Bhd (DRB) and Isuzu Motors Ltd which designs, produces, assembles, sells and distributes the trucks and all parts and components.

Hicom and DRB each holds 40 per cent equity while Isuzu holds the remaining equity in the company. The cost of the national truck project is estimated at RM280 million and funds for the project will be met by the stakeholders and loans from several banks and financial institutions.

On the proposal by the DRB-Hicom Group to construct a proving ground and a test track at Sungai Miang here, he said that various aspects especially land suitability were being considered.

He said that land suitability was essential as flooding may occur during the monsoon season.

The proving ground, he said, is to be used to gauge the performance of the truck in respect of its features and the test track is to be used to gauge its performance at maximum speed level.

Saleh said that the 960 hectares acquired by the company in Sungai Miang exceeded the land area required by the company. Suppliers of components for the assembling of passenger cars, buses, trucks and four-wheel drive vehicles would be accommodated on the remaining land, he added.

He said that the DRB-Hicom would invite about 250 of its vendors to set up their plants near the MTB plant which carries out assembling of trucks and buses and the Automotive Manufacturers Malaysia (AMM) plant which carries out assembling of passenger vehicles at the Peramu Industrial Zone here to facilitate delivery and to reduce cost. -- BERNAMA

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