

30 NOV 97

Mahathir-Electric

MAHATHIR TO LAUNCH FIRST ELECTRIC CAR TOMORROW

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- The first electric car produced by Perusahaan Otomobil Elektrik (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (Poem) will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

Tenaga Nasional Bhd executive chairman Datuk Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali said Dr Mahathir will also name the "buggy" model car during the launching ceremony at the Universiti Tenaga Nasional campus in Bangi.

He said the car fitted with more than 50 per cent local components was conceived and manufactured in only six months.

The local content would be increased from time to time, he told reporters after launching TNB's family day here today.

He said the first 10 such vehicles would be sent for the week-long Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA '97) Exhibition beginning Tuesday.

Dr Ahmad Tajuddin said tomorrow's launch would also mark the large scale production of the vehicle expected to be 500 in the initial stage.

He said the vehicle, which was not for road use, had received bookings or intentions to buy from Malaysia Airports Berhad, Malaysia Airlines (MAS), Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad and several holiday resorts in Langkawi.

"The first batch is only meant for use on private property but we are assembling another electric vehicle to be used on the road," he said.

He, however, declined to reveal details of the upcoming models, saying several units would be on display for the first time tomorrow.

On local content, Dr Ahmad Tajuddin said, Poem sourced the parts from local manufacturers and modified them to suit the vehicle.

Poem, chaired by Dr Ahmad Tajuddin, is a joint venture company in which TNB holds 40 per cent and Fraser Nash of Britain 30 per cent, with the remaining by Composite Automotive Research (CAR), Musteq Industries and FIMA Group chairman Tan Sri Basir Ismail. -- BERNAMA

MNY TS