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MEC AIMS TO CAPTURE 90 PCT RICE COOKER MARKET THROUGH PUTERI

PETALING JAYA, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- MEC Sales and Services Sdn Bhd, the marketing arm of Malaysia Electric Corporation (MEC), targets to capture close to 90 percent of the micro computer control rice cooker market in Malaysia through its product called MEC Puteri this year.

The company marketing manager for consumer products, J.E.Ng, said the optimistic target was based on 25,000 to 30,000 units sales expected for Puteri in 1997.

Speaking at a press briefing on the product here today, he said however, from the point of enclosed rice cooker market, the company expected to command around five to 10 percent of the domestic market.

The company's competitors for such a product locally are mainly the Japanese manufacturers.

"We are looking at 20 percent gross every year (for the enclosed rice cooker)," he said.

The home grown Puteri was created at a cost of RM8 million for the machinery and tooling at MEC's factory in Balakong.

Ng said MEC Sales and Services was looking at exporting the product to several Asean countries this year like Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam, where rice are the staple food.

Puteri is among the initial products sold by the company through 200 dealers nationwide and by March this year, 200 more dealers would be roped in.

At present MEC Sales and Services has five service centres and 50 dealers service centres.

The MEC rice cooker comes in two variants, namely HRC-18EA which has the function for keep warm, automatic temperature control with surround heating system and one push auto release button, and HRC-18CA with timer function (up to 13 hrs pre-programme), clock setting and liquid crystal display (lcd) control panel with pre-programme modes to cook four types of rice including porridge.

HCR-18EA has a recommended retail price of RM249 while HRC-18CA at RM339, half the price of the company's competitors.

MEC, a subsidiary of KLIH (Kuala Lumpur Industry Holdings Bhd) is a company engaged in the national project to produce electrical and household appliances under the Malaysian brand name.

MEC is the brainchild of prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the nation's march towards vision 2020.

Ng disclosed that while the company had obtained Sirim's certification for Puteri, it was working at getting foreign accreditation from countries like Singapore, Australia and Germany.

On MEC's RM4 billion MEC city project in Gambang, Pahang, he said its air-condition and refrigerator factories were expected to be operational in April this year. -- BERNAMA

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