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## MEC HOPES TO APPOINT 600 VENDOR COMPANIES BY 2000

KUANTAN, Oct 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia Electric Corporation Bhd (MEC), which will launch the vendor development programme tomorrow, hopes to pool together 600 vendor companies by the year 2000 to manufacture Malaysia's own brand of electrical products.

Its assistant general manager Desmond Ong, who is in charge of the programme, said the move is to maximise and optimise local sources in the manufacture of electrical appliances under the brand name MEC.

In the first stage over the next 12 months, MEC has targetted to appoint 42 vendors, Ong told reporters during a press visit to one of the company's five factories at the MEC City at Gambang near here today.

"The state government has set a target of at least 15 vendor companies by the end of the year," he said.

The first stage will also focus on the intake of companies involved in packaging, stamping and plastic injection.

"We are looking for more innovative products and also companies which are able to invest in machinery and equipment," Ong said, adding that the vendor programme is a long-term one and the companies chosen will grow with MEC.

To facilitate operations, about 285 hectares of land within MEC City will be allocated to vendor companies.

The vendor programme will help the localisation of components and parts which will benefit entrepreneurs, especially small and medium-scaled industries.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Khalil Yaakob will officiate the launching of the programme, which will see the signing of a tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development, MEC and Oriental Bank Bhd.

MEC, the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad, is a 60-percent owned subsidiary of Kuala Lumpur Industries Holdings Bhd (KLIH).

Khazanah National Bhd, the government's investment arm, also has a stake in it.

MEC produces appliances ranging from refrigerators, air-conditioners, rice and pressure cookers to audio-visual systems.

Eighty percent of the products are for the export market, Ong said, adding that MEC is undertaking various strategies to attract local buyers, such as organising roadshows, setting up more sales service centres and appointing more dealers.

The company currently has a network of 688 dealers and nine sales and service centres nationwide.

MEC chief operating officer, Neoh Kah Wah, said production in the five factories is running progressively.

He expects that by the year 2000 about 20 electrical appliance factories will be locate at the RM4-billion MEC City.

When fully developed and completed in 10 years time, MEC City will spearhead Malaysia's entry into the global electrical appliance industry.

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