

04/12/1997

PM to launch battery-powered bicycle

Kang Siew Li; Michele Sheares

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be launching Malaysia's first rechargeable battery-powered bicycle called the ECO on Saturday.

The bicycle is being manufactured and assembled by TWM Enterprise Sdn Bhd.

Speaking to Business Times in Langkawi yesterday, TWM Enterprise chairman Johan Ariffin said the company entered into an agreement with a company in China for the transfer of technology to manufacture the bicycle locally.

He declined to reveal more details, merely saying that TWM Enterprise has the right to market the bicycle worldwide, and he hopes that in the near future the company will be able to use at least 70 per cent local content in the assembly of the bicycle.

Johan said TWM Enterprise is also seeking for local agents to distribute its products in the country, adding the bicycles are being assembled at a factory located at Seri Kembangan, Selangor.

He also declined to elaborate on the size, capacity and construction cost of its plant in Seri Kembangan.

The bicycle, which costs between RM1,988 for the fully-battery-operated model and RM1,788 for the semi-battery-operated model, is claimed to be environment-friendly.

"It can either be pedalled manually or operated by battery," he said, adding the bicycle comes in different models for the men and the women.

Johan said the fully-battery-operated bicycle can be cycled like a normal bicycle on flat ground, but when going uphill, the battery is automatically activated.

The battery, he said, takes five hours to recharge fully, and the bicycle can reach a speed of up to between 15km and 20km per hour.

It can cover as far as 30km in distance, running on a fully recharged battery.

Johan said the bicycle comes in three designs to meet any lifestyles, and because they do not run on diesel, petrol or engine oil, they are cost-effective.

He also noted that the company has received six confirmed orders from both tourists and locals even before the launching of its products.

(END)