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Golf balls maker hopes to double last year's RM10m sales figure

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PROFESSIONAL Golf Company San Bhd expects to double the sales of its world standard range of golf balls in 1999, up from the RM10 million achieved last year, Sime Darby Bhd group deputy chairman Tunku Tan Sri Ahmad Yahaya said yesterday.

Professional Golf Company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of DMIB Berhad, which in return is a member of the Sime Darby group.

Tunku Ahmad said the company was positive on the sales outlook for this year based on the prospect of higher exports. More than half of its products were exported last year.

At present, the Thommo range of golf balls are exported to the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and recently, to the US.

Tunku Ahmad said his forecast of a higher turnover was also based on the fact that the Thommo range of golf balls would be the official ball at the World Cup of Golf tournament to be held in Kuala Lumpur later this year.

The ball was also the official ball during the World Cup of Golf tournament held at the Gulf Harbour Country Club, Whangaparaoa in New Zealand last year.

Professional Golf Company has over 20 years' experience in manufacturing golf balls - which meet the standards of the United States Golf Association and the Royal and Ancient Club of Scotland.

Tunku Ahmad said sales were expected to be higher on increased consumer awareness as the Thommo range of golf balls would be used at the 60-leg Thommo Titanium Golf Challenge '99.

The competition would be held at 60 golf courses nationwide. It kicked off in Kuala Lumpur yesterday and would end at the Glenmarie Golf & Country Club in Shah Alam, Selangor, on June 16.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad "teed-off" the tournament at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club yesterday.

Some 7,200 golfers will take part in what is being touted as the biggest amateur golf tournament the country has seen so far. The tournament is being held to promote the Malaysian-made Thommo range of golf balls.

Also present at the launch were Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik and five-time British Open champion Peter Thomson, who was involved in the development of the Thommo golf ball. The ball was named after Thomson.

The Thommo range of balls was also the first in Asia to be granted the status as an official golf ball for the World Cup of Golf series of tournaments, placing it on par with some of the best global brand names.

Currently, the company produces three models - the Thommo Titanium Extra Spin, Thommo Soft-Feel and Thommo DS-100. Its factory is in Negri Sembilan.

The company will continue to upgrade its Thommo range of golf balls through R&D programmes and will introduce new models in the market in the near future.

"We expect to introduce a new model, the Thommo Pro-Feel golf ball probably later this year. We may also introduce a new model that is suitable for lady golfers," he said.

Later, Dr Mahathir unveiled the Proton Perdana World Cup Golf '99 special edition car - which would be given away to those who manage to score a hole-in-one at the KL leg of the World Cup of Golf '99 tournament.

Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd is sponsoring this RM87,000 Proton

Perdana special edition.

Edaran Otomobil Nasional Berhad chairman Tan Sri Mohd Salleh Sulong, who was present, said: "EON is helping to build interest in the event by offering a Proton Perdana to any player who achieves a hole-in-one in the tournament."

The corporate edition automatic model also offers a special metallic light green finish. The car features the World Cup Gold emblem mounted on each side of the front fender.

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