

16 JAN 2003

MODENAS-KARISMA

MODENAS HOPES TO SELL 10,000 KARISMA SCOOTERS IN 2003

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 16 (Bernama) -- Motosikal dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd (Modenas) expects to sell around 10,000 units of its newly-launched Karisma scooter this year, its chief executive officer, Datuk Ir Rashid Din, said today.

Speaking at the launch of the 125 cc national scooter by Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyidin Yasin here, Rashid said the local scooter market was expected to see an increase in the demand to 36,000 units this year from 15,400 units in 2002.

He said the demand was expected to shoot up because scooters were becoming more competitively-priced. For instance, the Karisma costs RM4,688 each on-the-road.

The name, Karisma, was given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in November 2002.

Karisma is jointly developed by Modenas and its second technology partner, Motive Power Limited Industries (MPS), a Taiwanese manufacturer which produces P.G.O. scooters, a renowned brand. The national motorcycle maker's first technology partner was Kawasaki Heavy Industries of Japan.

The local scooter market contributed to only three percent of the Total Industry Volume in the country in 2000. There was a 30 percent rise in registered volume in 2001 and this rose by more than 100 percent in 2002.

As an indication of the popularity of scooters in the country, Rashid said the month to month comparison showed that demand had increased by 200 percent in November and December 2002 compared to the same months of 2001.

Some Karisma scooters would be exported in the next six months, he said, adding that Modenas motorcycles were gaining popularity in Indonesia, Iran and Greece.

"If ask you me if we are ready for the Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA), the answer is "yes, we are ready for AFTA," he said.

Rashid also said Modenas hoped to increase its domination of the local motorcycle market to 45 percent this year from 40 percent last year.

He said Modenas, a subsidiary of DRB-Hicom, dominated the local 110 cc moped market last year with a 50 percent share by selling some 88,000 units of the Kriss model.

Rashid said the Kriss would continue be the main model in terms of sales.

Modenas also markets the higher end Jaguh while two more models are expected to be launched in August and October this year. Another will be launched next year. -- BERNAMA

WNA SHY