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NAM-Expo (Strandcom)

STRANDCOM OFFERS WORLD-CLASS MADE-IN-MALAYSIA SMART HOME SYSTEM

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 19 (Bernama) -- Inspired by the "Malaysia Boleh" spirit, a bumiputera company is carving a niche in the smart home system sector by combining security and automation at a fraction of the cost of imported products.

"mi.GUARDZ", an intelligent smart home alarm and automation system developed by Strandcom Sdn Bhd, offers features that cost 85 per cent cheaper than imported ones. For example an imported system that costs around RM25,000 is sold by Strandcom at less than RM5,000.

And the system's quality is of international class as it meets standards set by Sirim Bhd and authorities in Europe and the United States.

"The test is not on technology as it is readily available but the test is on the ability to (remotely) control electrical appliances at a price acceptable to the masses," Strandcom group chief executive Badardin Ahmad said today.

Speaking to Bernama on the sidelines of the "Showcase Malaysia 2003" trade exhibition held in conjunction with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit at the Putra World Trade Centre, here, he said Strandcom owed it to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had instilled the "Malaysia Boleh" spirit in Malaysians.

"It's not something that people just talk about or treat lightly. It's actually lifting a nation from a certain mindset to a new mindset.

"Datuk Seri Dr Mahatir has shown us the way. You don't see Cyberjaya (a smart township in the heart of the Multimedia Super Corridor project) in every country in the world," he said.

The existence of Cyberjaya, Badardin said, had created a demand for a world-class smart home system and his company had been working with two of the three property developers in Cyberjaya to fit their residential units with mi.GUARDZ.

Strandcom is also doing the same with over 30 other property developers throughout the country.

"We have also done projects for individual houses that cost as low as RM3,000 per house to as high as RM300,000 per house."

Badardin said Strandcom had seen astonishing growth since its inception two-and-a-half years ago.

"We recorded RM700,000 revenue in 2001, RM4.5 million in 2002 and target it at RM24 million this year. In the first year, we made a loss of RM600,000 but we posted after-tax profit of RM1.3 million last year and this year we target a RM7 million profit after tax.

"Hopefully, by September or October, we can go for a Mesdaq listing. We have got proposals from four merchant banks to sponsor our listing and we are at the stage of appointing one of them," Badardin said.

He said Strandcom expected to raise between RM10 million and RM12 million from the planned listing exercise which would be utilised for overseas market expansion.

"So far, we have been focusing on Malaysia but last November we started to look at Thailand and last month, at China. And the reaction that we got was that they had never seen anything like it before," he said.

mi-GUARDZ is unique as it allows users to interface with electrical appliances through fixed-line telephone, handphone, Internet, personal digital assistant (PDA), wireless phone and its own intelligent pad.

It enables a houseowner who is away from home to, among others, dim the

lights, turn on the water heater, monitor the servants or children at home, activate the motorised window curtain or be alerted of intruders.

"Our system can take 128 appliances without the usage of complicated microprocessors. We managed to integrate such amount of appliances in a house because our architecture is simple.

"We believe in simplicity. As long as the brain of our system can get the information, it can control any appliance regardless of the brand or its protocol," Badardin added.

Come July, Strandcom would be redesigning mi-GUARDZ's motherboard to give the system additional features at a cheaper price.

"With the new product, we aim to fit mi-GUARDZ at residential projects under Syarikat Perumahan Negara, government quarters and low-cost houses," he added.

Badardin said that with the new modular system, homeowners would be able to add features to their mi-GUARDZ as and when they had the money to do so.

The new mi-GUARDZ, to be developed with local universities, would have "a bit" of artificial intelligence where it would recognise the habits of homeowners.

"For instance, if you like to drink coffee and have a hot shower when you arrive home, the system will automatically brew coffee for you and turn on the water heater as you get back," said Badardin.

On Strandcom's participation in "Showcase Malaysia 2003", he said it would serve to display to the NAM delegates the ability of Malaysian companies to produce world-class products.

"We want to show that there are bumiputera companies that can do things without relying on government `crutches'," he added.

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