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Pernec ventures into green power generation

By Jonathan Chia

KUCHING: Pernec Corporation Bhd (Pernec) is expanding its activities into green power generation, cashing in on the eternal source of solar and wind energy.

"This move is also in line with the Government's call for Malaysian corporations to move into green technology which is envisaged to become a vital area for global business in the 21st century," said Pernec managing director, Abdul Karim Abdul Sallam.

At the moment, the group is traditionally known as a major player in the telecommunication sector and is already manufacturing solar energy systems to power its payphones.

"Now we are looking into alternative green energy generation systems. We are already into solar with some of our payphones although the number is not that high and now we plan to solar-power all our payphones," said Abdul Karim.

"The telco and IT business are already saturated and we feel that we need to explore white ocean and green energy as the way to go in the future. This is in line with the Prime Minister's recent statement that only those who master the application of green technology and sustainable energy will become a winner in the 21st century and Pernec intends to be in the forefront in this playing field," he added.

As such, for the beginning, Pernec has identified solar energy and wind turbine energy systems to jumpstart its green energy business and has identified established global partners who possess the proven technological know-how which can then be



BRIEFING SESSION: Pernec's staff briefing students on the wind turbine.

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Abdul Karim Abdul Sallam, managing director

shared with local consumers. Studies have shown that at the moment, less than two per cent of energy generation originates from green sources such as hydro, wind, solar in Malaysia while the rest is derived from fossil fuel.

"We are confident that with the advancement of the green technology and the implementation of our alternative power generation systems, we can contribute a great deal towards a cleaner, greener Malaysia in tandem with our company's corporate social responsibility (CSR)'s 'Green Day Everyday' campaign," said Abdul Karim.

In addition, the Malaysian Government has also committed to reduce carbon

emission by 40 per cent by the year 2020 and being a responsible government-link organisation, Pernec feels that it needs to do everything possible to contribute towards achieving this goal.

"Therefore, everyone must conscientiously take steps to reduce usage of fossil fuel energy and begin to use alternative sources for energy such as green power systems," said Abdul Karim.

According to him, Pernec tested the wind turbine systems at three different locations in Kuching in conjunction with the Minggu Saham Amanah Malaysia (MSAM) 2010. Trials at various sites in Johor and Sabah have also been conducted. The test results

of these trials have been very encouraging.

"Our wind turbines have been proven to be more efficient in terms of generating higher energy due to their vertical structure as compared with the conventional horizontal wind turbines. This is due to the fact that vertical wind turbines can start generating energy with low-speed wind while the horizontal ones require much more velocity of the wind before it can start generating energy.

"We are also holding talks with several key Government and private organisations which have shown a keen interest in participating in this project and are confident of getting good response from them," he said.

"While there are more take-ups, the price of the systems will be subsequently reduced, making them more affordable for the masses. We are truly optimistic of the huge potential of these alternative energy sources," he concluded.

Long term investment for higher returns, says Lim

KUCHING: Go for long term investment to enjoy high returns in future. This was the advice from MIDF Amanah Asset Management Bhd's chief executive officer Scott Lim to those who want to invest in its four equity funds namely: MIDF Amanah Islamic Fund, MIDF Amanah Growth Fund, MIDF Amanah Dynamic Fund, and MIDF Amanah Strategic Fund.

He advised investors to go for at least a three to five years investment period, adding that from their past records, investors who go for 10 year periods can enjoy 300 per cent returns.

"Those who go for a five

year period can get about 200 per cent returns. These funds need about RM93 million in investment amounts. As these are growth funds, there is always a high risk," he said.

However, the good news was investors need not have to pay for sale charges of the amount subscribed from now until this year end, he said.

Lim and his team were here to give a talk on 'Investment and Market Outlook' at the Minggu Saham Amanah Malaysia (MSAM) 2010 on Wednesday evening.

MIDF Amanah Asset Management Bhd offers a

wide range of funds to cater to different investors' needs. Touching on MIDF Amanah Islamic Fund, and MIDF Amanah Islamic Bond Fund, Lim said these two bond funds are to be converted into money market funds by end of this year.

He explained that these were too small to be managed as bond funds as each only needed RM2 million in investment amounts.

Enquiries can also be made by emailing to midfamanah@midf.com.my or visit webpage at www.midf.com.my/cms/midfamanah.

Iron and steel industry to perform better this year, says Mustapa

KUALA LUMPUR: The iron and steel industry is expected to perform better this year, with demand going up, boosted by the pick-up in the construction sector.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said a new investment of RM300 million by a Malaysian company is expected for this industry over the next one to two years.

Approved total investments in the metal industry for 2009 amounted to RM3.96 billion, a significant drop from RM26.84 billion recorded in the previous year.

Exports of metal products for 2009 declined to RM23.36 billion from RM30.11 billion in the previous year.

Iron and steel exports last year amounted to RM8.82 billion.

Non-ferrous metal exports accounted for RM5.71 billion while fabricated metal exports amounted to RM8.83 billion.



Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed

"However, industry players have expressed concern over potential competition from China.

"China represents 50 per cent of the world iron and steel production," Mustapa said at a press conference after the ministry's dialogue with associations from the iron and steel industry.

Mustapa said the government will not backtrack its commitment under the Asean-China Free Trade Agreement. — Bernama

Honda targets to sell 1,600 units this year

KUALA LUMPUR: Honda Malaysia Sdn Bhd is targeting to sell 1,600 units annually of the Honda Freed, its newly launched premium compact multi-purpose vehicle (MPV).

Managing director and chief executive officer Toru Takahashi said the company was confident of achieving the sales target.

"Today, we received 150 bookings for this model," he told reporters at the launch of the Honda Freed here today.

The MPV, manufactured in Indonesia, was currently on sale in Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia, he said.

The stylish and contemporary-looking model houses the well-known 1.5L i-VTEC engine under its hood.

Its price on the road starts from RM112,980 to RM115,180. — Bernama

Green tech key driver for M'sia growth

KUALA LUMPUR: Green technology has the potential to become a key driver for growth, employment and technology in Malaysia, similar to the situation in Germany.

"The growth of renewable energy in Germany has increased from 6.3 per cent in 2000 to over 16 per cent in 2009," said Malaysian-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry general manager Thomas Brandt.

Speaking at the Green Tech Asia (GTA) 2010 Exhibition here today, he said about 500,000 people are expected to work in Germany's renewable sector by 2020.

Already, about 1.8 million

more people were currently employed in the environment and climate protection sector than in the automotive industry, Brandt said.

"We certainly believe that the government is on the right track with the formation of the National Green Technology Council by the relevant ministries as a first good step," he said.

Speaking at a media briefing, Fairs and Management Sdn Bhd's chief executive officer Jonathan Kan said the exhibition was aimed at showcasing the latest technologies and services that offered greater efficiency and productivity to industries and at the same time with capabilities to protect and preserve the

environment.

The four-day event, from today to Sunday, has received participation from 16 countries, including Malaysia, in showcasing their latest green technologies to promote environmental protection and energy conservation.

With the theme "For a Greener World", GTA 2010 incorporates three key sectors events comprising EnergyTech 2010, EnvironTech 2010 and CleanTech 2010.

The exhibition is also supported by the Waste Management Association of Malaysia, Solid Waste Contractors Association of Malaysia, and Malaysian Photovoltaic Industry Association. — Bernama

Firefly plans to expand fleet with B737-400s

KUCHING: FlyFirefly Sdn Bhd (Firefly), a subsidiary of Malaysian Airline System Bhd (MAS), is planning to absorb the aircraft from its parent company to expand its fleet of aircraft.

According to OSK Research Sdn Bhd (OSK Research), Firefly which currently operated through its main hub in Subang, Selangor aimed to bring communities close by overcoming geographical constraints.

It was reported that Firefly might take over the old B737-400s currently operated by Malaysian Airline System Bhd (MAS), the research house said.

It stated MAS managing director Tengku Datuk Azmil Zahrudin had not denied the move but said



FLYING HIGH: Firefly's aircraft fleet may soon be boosted in addition to its current ATR 72-500 workhorse.

MAS was evaluating "the best way to optimise" its B737-400 planes.

He also said the few available options included the B737-400s remaining a part of the MAS operating fleet with the B737-800 aircraft being used to expand into new and growth routes or deployed to Firefly, the research firm mentioned.

OSK Research pointed out they were not excited with Firefly's purported move to take over the old B737-400s currently operated by MAS.

MAS' strength was in the maintenance, repair and overhaul business but operating the old aircraft might still translate into high maintenance bills, according to the research house.

It appended that with Firefly's parent MAS being a full service carrier (FSC) that had been embarking on initiatives that included fleet renewal to reduce costs, the move appeared to contradict MAS' strategy.

However, OSK Research was of the opinion that Firefly obviously faced roadblocks in operating the B737-400s through Subang and hence might be forced to choose Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) or its low cost carrier terminal (LCCT).

The move would only further intensify the already stiff competition in the LCC segment should Firefly lose its advantage of operating from Subang which was closer to its passengers.

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