



IUMS team working on their car.

# UMS team through to Shell Eco-Marathon main event

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**SEPANG:** Sabah's only representative at the Malaysian Shell Eco-Marathon Asia (SEM) 2012 has made it through to the main event, completing its third consecutive appearance at the annual fuel-efficiency competition.

Team IUMS from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), which is banking on its gasoline-fuel prototype car, was among the first 52 contenders for titles in various categories after having passed the technical and safety inspection and was allowed to progress on Thursday.

More teams were expected to join the race for the main title, if they could make the necessary adjustment and fulfill the event's strict requirements before the Friday's flag-off.

Team manager Lee Kok Hau said he was looking forward to see how UMS would fare this time around, despite minor setbacks during the second day's test run.

"Everything is going well, except for some minor problems we had during the test run. The engine overheated a bit but we managed to fix the problems and now we'll see how it goes from here," he said.

The event being held at the Sepang International Circuit is scheduled to be concluded this evening (Saturday) with the announcement of the overall results and awards ceremony.

Held since Wednesday, the 2012 Eco-Marathon has attracted student teams from universities and higher learning institutions across 18 countries in Asia and the Middle East.

Organizer said 119 of the 123 registered teams were already on

site as of July 4, with 81 entries received under the Prototype category and 38 in the Urban Concept category.

Shell Eco-marathon is one of the world's most innovative and challenging student competitions held annually in Europe, America and Asia.

High school and college student teams from around the world are challenged to design, build and compete with energy efficient vehicles.

The winner is the team that goes the farthest distance on 1 kWh or 1 litre of fuel.

IUMS activity advisor, Chua Bih Lii, revealed that their entry this year boasts several significant improvements from the previous design developed by UMS.

He said the third generation car is a much better version of its predecessors, having smaller turning radius of 3.8m, better break system, stronger and lighter chassis and two-speed gear transmission that keeps the revolution per minute (rpm) at optimum level to save fuel.

The new car, which is built with lightweight and rigid aluminum 6061-T651 Chassis, still keeps the low 35cc four-stroke engine.

Chua said they reused the name of the first version of the SEM car, Tiger Beetle, because it shares the same mission of achieving the maximum energy utilisation using the simplest design concept.

He added the team hoped to finish better in terms of overall ranking compared to last year, where they only finished 26th overall and 6th among Malaysian teams in the gasoline prototype category.

"The participation of IUMS team in SEM Asia shows a strong spirit of team work and perseverance of our undergraduates. Here in Sabah, we have to deal with the high logistic cost with limited budget and industrial supports.

"Yet, we managed to put up the innovative prototype car for the fuel saving test at Sepang since the first edition of SEM Asia," he said, adding that they were hoping to cover more than 500 km/l this year.

The super-mileage competition kicked off in Asia in 2010 and more than 1,000 students were expected to be part of its third running.

Host Malaysia again this year has the biggest number of entries, fielding a total of 28 teams from various public and private higher learning institutions.

These include teams from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Technology Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Multimedia University (MMU), Taylor's University, and Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP).

Also competing are Politeknik Seberang Perai, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), University of Malaya (UM), Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, and University College of Technology and Innovation.

Apart from IUMS, another team from East Malaysia, Curtin Eco Racing Team of Curtin University Sarawak is also in the competition. Malaysia last year finished third place, behind winner Thailand and second runner-up Singapore.