

S'pore chosen as test site to give diesel fuel mix a greener name

A PROJECT, led by German engineering firm Bosch, hopes to change the negative image of diesel-powered vehicles and promote bio-diesel as an alternative environmentally-friendly fuel.

The cars in the project are powered by a fuel mixed with conventional diesel and 5 per cent palm-based bio-diesel.

A visual test was set up to prove that vehicles using this fuel emit cleaner fumes,

compared to those using conventional fuel and technology.

Tests will also be conducted to show that bio-diesel vehicles with modern technology have 33 per cent more fuel efficiency than conventional ones, and up to 25 per cent lower emission rates. The bio-diesel project is into its third and final testing phase.

Apart from Bosch, those involved in

the project are car-makers Volkswagen and Mercedes Benz, as well as Shell Eastern Petroleum and bio-fuel producer Nexsol.

The Economic Development Board and the National Environment Agency are partners in the project.

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Tap the sun and plug in

Bright minds invent table that stores solar power for gadgets, no cords attached

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USING solar power at home could now be as simple as buying a new table for the garden.

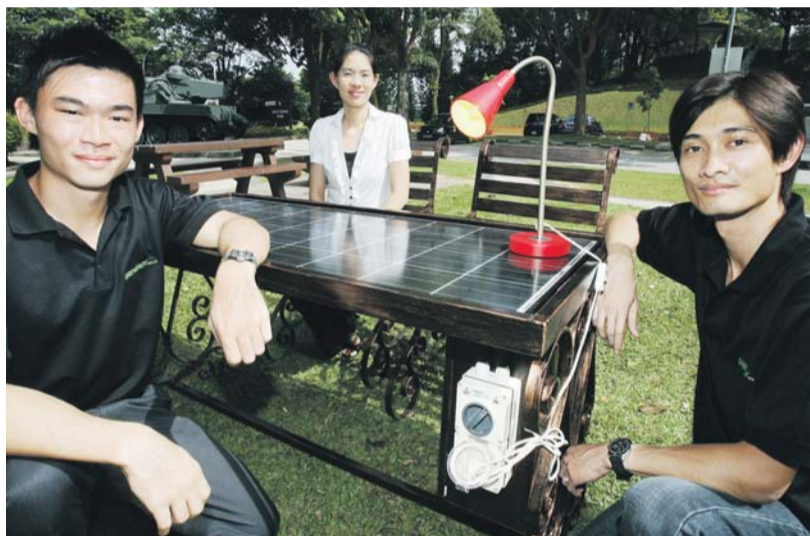
With the solar table developed by local start-up Grenergy, one can sit in the garden and use a laptop or radio, without worrying about the power running out or having to run extension cords out of the house.

The appliance plugs into a socket at the side of the table. And, as a bonus, no carbon dioxide is released in generating the electricity – helping to reduce one's carbon footprint.

The product will be launched at this year's GardenTech fair which starts on Friday, organised by the National Parks Board (NParks).

Marketed by biodegradable plastics company Winrigo, the table features a top made up of solar panels that can power a laptop for at least five hours, or an electric fan for over 10 hours.

Said Mr Lawrence Ng, one of the directors of five-month-old Grenergy: "We got the idea when we were



SOLAR DREAM: Team members from Grenergy and Winrigo with the solar table, which supplies enough power for appliances such as radios, lamps, electric fans and laptops.

using a laptop in the park one day and the battery ran out. We decided to try and make something that would let us to use our gadgets outdoors."

Mr Ng, currently a Mechanical Engineering undergraduate at Nanyang Technological University, then set up the company with four partners and created a prototype of the table in July.

With four hours of charging in the sunlight, the table will supply enough power for appliances such as radios, lamps, electric fans and laptops, but not for heating products like electric stoves or power tools. "That's something we're looking into," said Mr Ng.

A full set comprising a table and four chairs – made out of wrought iron – will be sold at a promotional price of \$4,500 at GardenTech, and for \$5,500 after the fair.

Said NParks director Kong Yit San of the possibility of using the solar tables in local parks: "We're open to technologies and innovations that will benefit park users. We will explore the feasibility of using this innovation in our parks."

The GardenTech fair, which runs from Dec 7 to 11 at the new HortPark off Alexandra Road, will showcase the latest in plants, gardening and garden furniture. Admission is free.

Gambling and addiction woes? Let the experts help

AS SINGAPORE gets ready for the casinos, an international advisory panel has been set up to help the authorities deal with issues such as problem gambling and addiction.

The panel will hold a three-day meeting from today to look into issues such as how to prevent, manage and treat problem gambling and other addictions in Singapore.

They will also advise on the proposed National Addictions Management Centre (NAMC), which aims to provide a more holistic approach to help people overcome addictions.

The panel will be co-chaired by Professor Goh Chee Leok, senior consultant at the Office of Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health; and Professor David Chan, interim dean, School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University (SMU).

Its eight overseas members, from countries such as United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, are experts in problem gambling, drug abuse, alcoholism and other high-risk behaviours.

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The experts include Dr Gracemary Leung, director of the Psychological Services Unit at the University of Hong Kong, who has experience in counselling problem gamblers; Dr Alex Blaszczynski, an internationally-renowned researcher in gambling and problem gambling from Australia; Dr Samson Tse from New Zealand, an expert on Asian mental health and problem gambling; and Dr Lori Rugle, a clinical psychologist from the US who is an expert on pathological gambling.

The panel will submit their recommendations to the Ministry of Health and the National Council on Problem Gambling by the end of this month.

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