

# MetroBiz

Star

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## Driving into the future

Electric vehicles provide local folk who live with limited mobility a chance to move around independently. >20&21

**Rolling out mobility:** Mustapha Kamal Zulkarnain and his wife, Kameela Chang, set up Kuala Lumpur Electric Vehicles Sdn Bhd (KLEV) in 2009 to market electric vehicles from Taiwan under the Ezzy Rider brand.





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25% to-date and Mustapha hopes to create a bigger demand for electric vehicles in Malaysia.

While KLEV serves consumers at its physical outlet in Kelana Jaya, much of its business is concentrated on the business-to-business segment as it is the sole distributor for Ezzy Rider in Malaysia and Brunei.

"We work with other channels such as pharmacies to educate consumers on products such as electric wheelchairs and scooters," Mustapha said.

While electric vehicles are a boon for those with limited mobility, Mustapha added that the vehicles were also another option for ordinary road users looking to be more environmentally-friendly.

Given that electric vehicles do not use fuel, he explained that they were suitable for running short errands such as picking up groceries.

"With a car, you will probably spend a considerable amount of time looking for a parking spot. That burns fuel and time. With the electric scooter or motorcycle, you can move around a lot easier and faster," he said.

Reports note that demand for two-wheel vehicles has been growing in the region due to their fuel efficiency and ease of use in congested traffic, which is a regular feature in most Asian cities.

Last year, a report by Pike Research estimated that annual sales of electric two-wheel vehicles will reach 65.5mil units in the Asia-Pacific region by 2018 from over 40mil units in 2012. Notably, 92% of these vehicles will be sold in China.

KLEV will be rolling out its electric motorcycle soon, once it gets the go-ahead from the Road Transport Department.

Mustapha said demand looked promising for now but a lot more could be done to encourage the use of electric vehicles here.

For example, local councils need to provide more bicycle lanes, which can accommodate electric two-wheelers, and a suitable locked parking space.

# Electric vehicles offer greener options



**Making life easier:** Electric vehicles are suitable for running short errands.



**Easy to charge:** The lithium-ion battery used in Ezzy Rider's vehicles takes about 30 minutes to an hour to recharge and can last up to 40km on a bicycle.

Additionally, with a lot of government efforts geared towards a greener environment, Mustapha hopes more infrastructure, such as charging stations, will be put in place and policies enforced to ensure a conducive environment for electric vehicle users.

"If all goes well with the implementation of government policy and when more

charging stations are available, we want to bring in chargeable cars as well," he said.

KLEV is looking at eventually bringing in the full range of electric vehicles manufactured by its Taiwanese partner and put together a supermarket concept for electric vehicles, which Mustapha said was missing in Malaysia.

"The level of understanding for electric vehicles here is still at a nascent stage. If you were to demonstrate to someone how an electric vehicle works, they would be in awe. But it is an ordinary thing in other countries like Taiwan. So we have a long way to go," Mustapha said.

KLEV is heavily promoting its products at various tradeshows to increase consumer awareness on electric vehicles.

And with more road users becoming increasingly conscious about the green trend, Mustapha is confident that the company is on the right track.



**Easy to park:** With electric bicycles, you do not need to go through the hassle of looking for a parking spot.



**Husband-wife team:** Chang (left) and Mustapha hope to bring in the full range of electric vehicles manufactured by their Taiwanese partner to put together a super mart concept for electric vehicles.

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Cover story



Aiming big: Mustapha hopes to create a bigger demand for electric vehicles in Malaysia.

# Sleek and convenient

Electric vehicles enable elderly and immobile to move around easily

By JOY LEE  
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Photos by LOW LAY PHON

Start-up capital for KLEV  
**RM500,000**  
**25%** Company sales growth to-date



Mustapha: It is not easy to depend on someone all the time.

NOT many businesses are born to rally around a particular social problem. But Kuala Lumpur Electric Vehicles Sdn Bhd (KLEV) was founded to provide local folk who suffer from limited mobility a chance to move around independently.

The company, which was started in 2009 by Mustapha Kamal Zulkarnain and his wife Kameela Chang, distributes electric vehicles imported from Taiwan, such as electric scooters, wheelchairs and bicycles.

The products are marketed under local brand Ezzy Rider.

Mustapha, who frequents Taiwan, was amazed at how the elderly and immobile there were able to move around on their own using electric vehicles.

He recounted the story of an old man in Taiwan who drove himself to the hospital for a medical check-up on his electric wheelchair and promptly drove himself back home after that.

"Those who are immobile always need

help to move around. But it is not easy to depend on someone else all the time, even if they are family.

"People tend to grow tired of pushing you around and it can be difficult to wheel a larger-sized person around.

"So, we wanted Malaysians to have the same mobility and independence that we saw in other countries. The motorised vehicles are convenient for them," said Mustapha, whose father is a paraplegic.

With a start-up capital of over RM500,000, Mustapha brought in products

from Taiwan which few were aware of and fewer still understood.

Despite Malaysia's growth towards becoming a developed country, Mustapha noted the lack of motorised vehicles on the road.

In its early days, KLEV faced an uphill task of educating local consumers about the benefits of using electric wheelchairs and scooters.

KLEV showcased its Ezzy Rider electric two-wheelers at the iGEM 2010 and Mustapha said people were amazed at what the vehicles could do.

"We received a lot of good feedback and we heard people saying things like 'had I known about this a year ago, I would have bought it for my mother or father'. So there is demand for these products in Malaysia but consumers don't know about them or where to get them," he said.

But Chang, who is a Taiwanese, added that there was still much educating to be done before sales boomed.

Notably, the company's sales has grown



User-friendly: An elderly woman moving around on her own using an electric wheelchair.

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