

Yamaha unveils zero-emission electric motor scooter

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Japan's Yamaha Motor President Hiroyuki Yanagi stands next to the company's new electric commuter vehicle EC-03 (50cc License Class) during a press preview in Tokyo.

Japan's Yamaha Motor unveiled on Wednesday a zero-emission electric motor scooter for city use that it said could travel five times farther than a gasoline model for the same cost.

The EC-03 can travel 43 kilometres (26.6 miles) on a single six-hour charge from a household power outlet, which costs about 18 yen (cents) in Japan, far less than the cost of powering a conventional 50cc scooter, it said.

Yamaha will launch the e-moped on September 1 in Tokyo, and a month later across Japan, at an expected retail price of 252,000 yen (2,800 dollars).

It will start exports to Taiwan and Europe in 2011, and forecasts total demand to reach 300,000 to

500,000 units by the mid-2010s as it expands into other markets, such as China.

"China is the largest market for electric bicycles, with estimated annual demand exceeding 20 million units," Yamaha said in a statement.

"A still more enormous market for electric motorcycles is expected to develop in China.

"The company is launching into this expanding global market with a view to gaining the highest share worldwide."

The motor scooter has a lightweight aluminium alloy frame and is powered by a 50V lithium-ion battery manufactured by [Sanyo Electric](#).

"It emits no [carbon dioxide](#) and can be stored away inside the house as it would leak no [gasoline](#)," a Yamaha spokesman said.

The model represents a return to the electric market for Yamaha, which in 2002 became the first firm to mass produce an [electric motorcycle](#), the Passol.

It then launched two more advanced models in 2005 but stopped sales of all electric motorcycles in 2007 due to battery problems.

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