



## DLSU students unveil 'Sinag,' RP's first solar-powered car

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The first Philippine solar-powered car, dubbed "Sinag," was launched yesterday to highlight the country's efforts to promote the use of alternative sources of energy.

Students and faculty members, mostly from the engineering department of De La Salle University (DLSU)-Manila, are responsible for developing Sinag.

The car resembles a pair

of wings on wheels, with its solar cell-covered top surface stretching a little over six square meters. It is made out of carbon fiber and Nomex (aramid fiber) in order to keep it light – only 150 kilograms – and fast.

"This first Philippine entry to the annual solar car racing event is a fine example of how the country can rise and stand with the rest of the world in meeting such

a challenge, which requires superior technology and skill," a representative of the team developing the car, said.

Sinag will be using solar cells from Sunpower, the highest efficiency solar cells in the world, also made in the Philippines, he added.

Sinag was launched at the NBC Tent in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Turn to Page 7

## DLSU From Page 1

Leading the technical working team are La Salle faculty members, engineers Rene Fernandez, Martin Ernesto Kalaw, Anthony Escobar, Jose Antonio Catalan and Isidro Marfori III, together with a number of engineering students.

The team is being assisted by the Ford Group Philippines, San Miguel Corp., Shell, Sunpower, Philippine Airlines and Ventus.

A solar car is an electric vehicle powered by energy obtained from solar panels mounted on top of the car. Solar cars are reportedly not a practical form of transportation yet as they can only operate during the day and can only carry one or two passengers.

However, they are being raced in competitions such as the World Solar Challenge, which will be held in Australia from Oct. 22 to 28 this year. Events such as this aim to promote the development of alternative energy technology such as solar cells.

Conceived by fuel economy expert Hans Tholstrup in 1987, the World Solar Challenge is the biggest solar car race in the world, participated in by around 20 countries. The annual race is 3,010 kilometers long and cuts through the Australian continent, from Darwin to Adelaide.

The main technology behind the solar car, known as the "photovoltaic cell," has been available since 1883, but incorporating this into a practical and sustainable form of transportation is said to be an ongoing process.

The solar car race reportedly seeks to further drum up support for the development of a solar car that can go toe-to-toe with fossil fuel-powered vehicles.