

Lombok set to produce Moslem fashion goods

LOMBOK is the operational base of a new company which is combining core tenets of Islam with modern, fashionable design in religious items such as the tasbih strand of prayer beads.

Emerald Nile, recently launched to coincide with Ramadhan, is using the names Allah and Muhammad cast in silver in Arabic script as the feature of a tasbih.

And it is incorporating tasteful fashion into the design of the tasbih to appeal to younger Moslems and the young at heart.

It also is using the date of Muhammad's passing as the most significant design element of its kopiah and jilbaab collection of Moslem headwear.

Company head Bill Savola believes Emerald Nile's mixing of Islamic principles, monikers and religious items, such as the tasbih, with modern design is a world first.

Twenty people are ready to produce the new-look tasbih in a village near Senggigi and there also are work stations on Bali and Java.

Mr Savola plans to employ another 20 people on Lombok to operate sewing machines that will produce the kopiah and jilbaab.

Research has found there is no opposition to referring to Muhammad on a T-shirt, he says. And if sales of the Moslem fashion items are successful, he may introduce a range for Hindus.

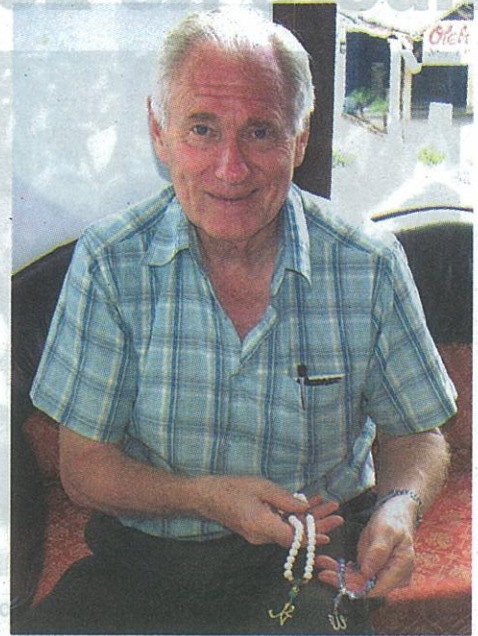
Since 1993, Mr Savola has independently contributed to the education and general welfare of several young people in Indonesia. Three have completed university.

He says much of the inspiration for the Emerald Nile project has come from those who have received aid toward their education.

Emerald Nile, which has its headquarters in Michigan, USA, Mr Savola's home, aims to raise funds for further education.

Some of the more expensive tasbih include Lombok pearls which also are available for purchase on the Emerald Nile website at www.mecca-medina-tasbih.com.

Most tasbih have a wick scented with jasmine.



BILL Savola with some of the products he hopes to make a byword in new fashion.