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Folding bike!

Evening News Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Nov. 12 — An ideal vehicle for travelling short distances on the congested urban roads has been developed by a Taiwan-born naturalised American inventor, Mr David Hon. The vehicle is a portable bicycle which can be folded and is known as the Dahon.

The cycle is less cumbersome than ordinary bicycles and can be easily carried about as it weighs a mere 32 pounds. The wheels of the bicycle are only 16 inches in diameter and it has three gears.

The cycle is useful for ladies in particular as it has been developed in a ladies' style. The safety factor of the bike is also substantially higher than that of normal cycles as it has a very low centre of gravity.

The cycle is being promoted by a New York-based group called Transportation Alternatives (TA). A member of TA, Ms Mary Frances Dunham, told *Evening News* this morning that the bike was a very viable mode of travel for short distances. She added that the TA believed in non-motorized means of travel in public transportation and that the Dahon helped in cutting down on pollution caused by the fuel used in motorized vehicles. Other than being a very healthful daily means of travelling, the bike would also offer a simple solution to the problem of traffic congestion which

afflict major cities.

About 5,000 such bikes have already been manufactured. Each cycle costs \$270 (about Rs 4,900).

Other than the USA, this type of bikes have already gained acceptance in



Ms Mary Frances Dunham giving a demonstration of the Dahon bike here this morning.

— Pic. H. C. Tiwari

Europe and are used regularly in France and Germany. An even lighter and smaller bike is being used in Sweden, according to Ms Dunham, and it folds like an umbrella and instead of the chain that is found on normal cycles it has a rubber-plastic chain.

On the whole the Dahon would be welcome addition to the Delhi roads, as it offers solutions to some of the more basic problems of the Capital's commuters. For instance, it does not require petrol, so keeping in mind the hike in petrol rates, it would be a policy of economy to ride a Dahon. And for those who are bothered by the daily headache of traffic jams, this bike which takes up minimal space would offer a panacea.