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MAHATHIR-AIROD

SUBANG, MARCH 11 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY COMMENDED AIROD SDN BHD, THE FIRST GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION TO BE PRIVATISED, FOR ITS SUCCESS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION AND SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S INVESTMENT WAS +WORTHWHILE+.

HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER A TWO-HOUR VISIT OF THE AIRCRAFT SERVICE COMPANY'S FACILITIES HERE THAT ALTHOUGH AIROD WAS NOT MAKING AS MUCH PROFIT AS IT WANTED TO, IT HAD HELPED THE GOVERNMENT SAVE ABOUT \$4 MILLION TO \$4.5 MILLION A YEAR.

+FOR EXAMPLE, THE RECOVERY OF THE F5 AIRCRAFT CAN NOW BE DONE BY AIROD.

+OTHERWISE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO SPEND \$3 MILLION TO DO IT ABROAD,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO PRAISED AIROD FOR ITS SUCCESS IN MANUFACTURING THE DIGITAL FLIGHT DATA RECORDER OR +BLACK BOX+ WITH 85 PERCENT LOCAL CONTENT FOR THE LOCKHEED CORPORATION OF THE UNITED STATES. -- MORE

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AIROD, WHICH COMPLETED ITS FIRST +BLACK BOX+ UNIT TODAY, WILL MANUFACTURE ABOUT 200 UNITS THIS YEAR AND AIMS TO HAVE A YEARLY PRODUCTION OF 400 UNITS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED THAT AIROD WOULD GO INTO MORE MANUFACTURING ACTIVITIES.

HE SAID AIROD WAS ABLE TO MAKE A PROFIT OF \$80,000 IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION LAST YEAR, WITH A TURNOVER OF \$17.9 MILLION.

AIROD WAS EXPECTED TO MAKE MORE PROFIT THIS YEAR IN VIEW OF THE MANUFACTURE OF THE +BLACK BOX+ AND THE GOOD CHANCES OF GETTING CONTRACTS FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, HE SAID.

AIROD SDN BHD, FORMERLY THE RMAF AIRCRAFT REPAIR AND OVERHAUL DEPOT, IS THE FIRST GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION TO BE PRIVATISED UNDER THE PRIVATISATION POLICY. -- MORE

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THE COMPANY IS A JOINT VENTURE, WITH AEROSPACE INDUSTRY OF MALAYSIA (AIM) OWNING 51 PERCENT AND LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL 49 PERCENT.

AIM IS A THREE-WAY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT, MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SYSTEM (MAS) AND THE UMW GROUP.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS GIVEN A ONE-HOUR CLOSED-DOOR BRIEFING BY AIROD MANAGING DIRECTOR J.R.WATT ON THE COMPANY'S DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING AND PLANS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR LATER SPENT ANOTHER HOUR VISITING THE VARIOUS FACILITIES AT AIROD, INCLUDING THE AIRCRAFT STRUCTURE REPAIR WORKSHOP AND THE AVIONIC DIVISION.

PRESENT WERE AIM CHAIRMAN DATUK HAJI AMIR YAAKUB, MAS MANAGING DIRECTOR DATUK ABDUL AZIZ ABDUL RAHMAN AND AIROD GENERAL MANAGER DATUK ARIFF AWANG.

-- BERNAMA

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