

Competitive edge in composite technology

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday launched the region's only Composite Technology City (CTC) in Batu Berendam, Malacca, describing it as a pinnacle of Malaysia's venture into the high-tech composite industry.

The composite industry, he said, is one of world's new industries.

The composite technology city is Dr Mahathir's brainchild. He announced plans last year to establish the city as a means to help the country move into the aerospace industry.

Composite is a high-performing industrial material which is the ideal substitute for a range of products in aerospace and non-aerospace industries.

The ground-breaking ceremony yesterday was for the first phase of the proposed 200ha zone. For the 23ha first phase, an aerospace industry centre to manufacture composite parts, a plant for Eagle Air-

craft Malaysia to manufacture the Eagle XTS, an arena and a composite factory will be built.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia did not have the ambition to produce aircraft like Boeing 747, but was quite ambitious to produce aircraft parts.

Representatives of several foreign firms, including Boeing Commercial Airplane, Airbus Industrie, Pratt & Whitney and Shorts Brothers were also present.

He explained to them that Malaysia also wanted to be an industrialised and developed country and has given itself until 2020 to be one "although we have a tradition of doing things very quickly".

For example, he said there was a factory which was completed in six months, though it was originally scheduled for 18 months.

"That's the pace we have set for ourselves. Our people acquire skills very quickly and this has enabled them

to master technologies that are foreign to them."

Composites Technology Development Corporation (CTDC) chairman Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman said CTDC might work with big names in the industry like Boeing, Airbus, Pratt & Whitney and the Shorts Brothers for projects located there.

Collaboration need not only be in joint manufacturing of components? he said.

"Their certification in the projects or products manufactured at the CTDC will be useful," he said.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik said Malaysia's venture into the composite industry would give it a competitive edge as it was one of the world's new industries.

Among the companies expected to be based in the composite zone are Mofaz Air, Wirakris Udara Sdn Bhd, Melaka Flying Club and Malacca Flying Academy