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MAS TOLD TO MANUFACTURE AIRCRAFT INTERIOR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today proposed that Malaysia Airlines (MAS) manufacture aircraft interior locally to help the government reduce the country's current account deficit.

In making the proposal, he said the government would like to see MAS purchase its aircraft "green."

"MAS can do it since it has done so well," he said when launching MAS Aerotechnologies Sdn Bhd in Subang, near here. The MAS subsidiary was formerly the engineering division of MAS.

MAS has placed a firm order for 15 B777 and 10 B747-400 aircraft from Boeing Commercial Airplane Company at an estimated cost of RM10 billion.

Dr Mahathir said it was important that Malaysia produce components locally so as to reduce imports as well as manufacture quality products for export.

Citing the potential of MAS to produce aircraft interior fittings locally, he said, the national carrier could produce such products for other airlines too.

Dr Mahathir also suggested that MAS Aerotechnologies look into the possibility of manufacturing composites and electronic parts for aircraft.

He said: "I am very interested to reduce the country's imports."

Asked whether MAS should embark on a programme to produce such parts for the 25 new aircraft, he replied: "Yes, with the new aircraft on order, MAS should try as much as possible to produce aircraft fittings and parts in the country."

He also hoped MAS Aerotechnologies would be listed of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange and contribute further to Malaysia's growth in the aerospace industry.

-- BERNAMA

JSM LDB