

22 MAY 1996  
Mahathir-university  
PM VISITS SURREY UNIVERSITY

By: Wan A Hulaimi

LONDON, May 22 (Bernama) -- A technology transfer programme that will enable Malaysia to play an active role among the world's space nations through micro-satellite technology was discussed when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad met space technology scientists at the Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL) complex in Cwildfard, 48km from here.

SSTL, is a wholly-owned commercial arm of the centre for the satellite Engineering Research (CSER) of the modern plate-glass University of Surrey.

Its boasts a micro-satellite technology capability that is not only many million pounds cheaper than conventional production costs but is also at the forefront in the cost-effective league table.

SSTL is already making micro-satellite technology for Chile, Portugal, Thailand, Korea and Pakistan and is now vying for a contract to make and a launch a satellite in space for Malaysia.

During his visit here an a stopover from his tour of Japan and America Dr Mahathir toured CSER's "clean rooms" where satellites are assembled and the ground station which monitors the progress of STLL's eight satellites which are already in orbit.

CSER in fact is no stranger to Malaysia. A Malaysian, Valerie Chu, from Sabah is currently here doing doctoral research in space technology. Dr Mahathir met her with some of the 114 Malaysians studying at Surrey University.

The visit to this university is of special interest to Dr Mahathir because SSTL is among the bidders, with other countries like India, which are offering Malaysia their expertise for the planned Malaysian satellite programme.

SSTL has made a name for itself as a world leader in micro-satellite technology and as pioneer in the international movement towards smaller, faster and cheaper satellite missions.

Prof Martin Sweeting, SSTL managing director said: "Dr Mahathir's visit is part of talks on the growing possibility of a UK-Malaysian collaboration whereby the University of Surrey will develop a technology transfer programme to enable Malaysia to join and play an active role among the world's space nations through the acquisition of micro-satellite technology."

"A constellation of affordable minisatellites will monitor and relay vital information on haze, deforestation and logging, oil spillage and flood hazard," he added.

Dr Mahathir also had a dialogue with Malaysian students here and in the afternoon Labour Leader Tony Blair called on Dr Mahathir at Hyde Park Gate.

-- BERNAMA

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