

21 JAN 1996
Law-satellite
SECOND MALAYSIAN SATELLITE NEXT YEAR

SHAH ALAM, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will launch its second satellite next year for educational, research and communications purposes, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today.

He said it was impressive for Malaysia which had just launched into orbit, its first ever satellite, Measat 1, and this time, having its own engineers build the 50-kilogramme micro-satellite.

"By the year 2000, Malaysia will take pride by having at least two satellites in space," he told reporters after closing the Sumur City Aerospace Adventure exhibition here.

He said a blue print on space science and technology was being drafted by his ministry as had been directed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Space Science Studies Division (SSSD) which was set up on Feb 7, 1994 under the Prime Minister's Department and subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Science and Technology in June 1995, would head the project, he said.

Law said the focus would be on research and development (R&D) to expand Malaysia's capability in the field of space science.

On the exhibition, a first for an Asian country, he said a survey showed that 48 per cent of the 500,000-odd visitors came from the Klang Valley and the rest from other states.

"Close to two-third were students," he said, adding that some three million Malaysians were found to be keen on space science.

In his speech earlier, he said the space race was not only between Russia and the United States as many countries in the world including Malaysia had begun to be involved.

The government was aware of the significance of the field and would develop its own expertise thus "leap-frogging" other countries that were more progressive in the space industry.

At the ceremony, Law presented a certificate from the government to Kumpulan Sumur Wang which spent some RM10 million to stage the three-month long showcase displaying 40 years of Russian experience in space exploration.

Among those present were Deputy Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Abu Bakar Daud, the ministry's secretary-general, V. Danabalan, SSSD director-general Prof Dr Mazlan Othman and Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim who was a last-minute visitor. -- Bernama