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Deal to upgrade MiG-29 Fulcrum jets

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today witnessed the signing of a contract involving Malaysian and Russian parties to upgrade the capabilities of Royal Malaysian Air Force's MiG-29 Fulcrum fighter jets.

The RM100-million modification deal is to equip the aircraft with aerial refuelling probe and to enhance various avionics systems of the Russian-made air superiority fighter jets.

The contract was signed during the Prime Minister's visit to the TechXchange '97 exhibition at the Mines International Exhibition Centre.

TechXchange '97 is an exhibition and conference on Russian technology which showcases advanced and cutting-edge technologies from Russia.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Russian Ambassador to Malaysia, Vitaly Vorobyev, were also present.

The signatories are the Government of Malaysia, Aerospace Technology Systems Corp Sdn Bhd, aircraft manufacturer Moscow Aircraft Production Organisation-MiG and the State Corporation Rosvoorouzhenie.

The Finance Ministry's Government Procurement Management Division under-secretary Datuk Dr Mohd Shahar Sidek signed for the Government while ATSC was represented by its chairman, Datuk Azizan Hussain, who is also Defence Ministry secretary-general.

Mapo-MiG was represented by its deputy director-general, Trifinov Victor Petrovich, while Skoibeda Vassali Vladimirovrich signed for Rosvoorouzhenie.

ATSC general-manager Brig Jen (Rtd) Datuk Richard Robless told reporters the modification work would be carried out at ATSC's aircraft maintenance complex in Kuantan over 18 months from January. The procurement of the jets, at a cost of RM1.3 billion, was made in 1994.

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