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Globalising the SMIs

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KALSOM Abdul Rahman took only a short break during the Hari Raya festival last month to hold an important brainstorming session with her staff. On the agenda was a discussion on how her development agency could help increase the role of local small and medium-sized industries (SMIs) in various economic activities.

The chief executive officer of the Small and Medium-sized Industries Development Corporation (Smidec) for less than a year, Kalsom considers it a top priority to work out the best strategies for building up SMIs so they go beyond being strong locally and become globally competitive as well.

"This is not an easy task because it involves changing SMI's attitude as well as its micro and macro environments," she says.

Smidec is reported to be spending RM270 million this year on development programmes for SMIs, which represent 84 per cent of the manufacturing sector but only contribute 17.8 per cent to product added value.

Dataniaga takes a look at how Smidec, with Kalsom at its helm, hopes to address this problem and take up the challenge of globalising the SMIs.

A subsidiary of Malaysia Airlines, MAS Aerotechnologies Sdn Bhd, has recorded encouraging profits of RM400 million for the last fiscal year.

This may boost this year-old company towards its goal of becoming a regional maintenance and repair centre for Asia Pacific.

This month, Dataniaga speaks to MAS Aerotechnologies president, Nur Amiruddin Mohd Nordin, who is also senior vice president of the MAS group, on how the company plans to achieve that goal despite competition from Sasco (Singapore) and Haeco (Hong Kong).

The existence of several nations with the word "Guinea" in their name can be confusing. When the Republic of Guinea opened its Malaysian embassy last October, many people mistook it for Papua New Guinea.

Guinea's ambassador, Ibrahima Sory Camara, takes it all in his stride and explains that it is because the West African republic, which gained its independence in 1958, is still new to Asian nations. Relations between Malaysia and Guinea are progressing well, Ibrahima says, with a visit by Guinean president Brig.-Gen. Lansana Conte to Malaysia in 1995 and one by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Guinea last year.

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