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MALAYSIA TO BUY SA's ROOIVALK ATTACK COPTERS

By: E.Sivabalan

CAPE TOWN, May 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia is likely to purchase and participate in the manufacture of the Rooivalk attack helicopters from South Africa.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) has evaluated the helicopters, he said.

"Chances are we will purchase the Rooivalk helicopters," he told reporters after receiving South Africa's highest award, the Order of Good Hope from President Nelson Mandela here.

Dr Mahathir arrived here today for a one-day visit. He was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar was quoted as saying last month that Malaysia had agreed to purchase eight such helicopters.

Syed Hamid had also said that at the same time Malaysia was analysing proposals from other countries interested in selling their attack helicopters like the Panther, Tiger, Krueger and Apache.

Mandela also told reporters he and Dr Mahathir followed-up on their talks during his visit to Malaysia last March. -- BERNAMA

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