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MAS signs deal to purchase Boeing's new business jet

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad witnessed the first signing of agreements among companies participating in the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) exhibition, shortly after opening the six-day event yesterday.

Malaysia Airlines and Boeing Commercial Airplane Group yesterday signed a deal for the purchase of a Boeing Business Jet - the Next Generation 737-700.

Managing director Datuk Wan Malek Ibrahim signed on behalf of Malaysia Airlines and president Borge Boeskov for Boeing Business Jets.

The order from Malaysia Airlines is one of 29 announced orders for the business jets since its launch in July last year. The jet is a joint venture between Boeing and General Electric Co.

Boeskov said Malaysia Airlines is the first of many expected customers in Asia to announce their purchase of the jet.

The price for an unfinished "green" Boeing Business Jet is US\$33.75 million (US\$1 = rm3.61). Typically, a completed and equipped business jet will cost some US\$40 million on delivery.

Delivery of Malaysia Airlines' Boeing Business Jet is scheduled for 1999.

The second signing agreement was between locally-based Plus & Plus Technologies Sdn Bhd and Aviation Blade Services Inc of the US for the transfer of technology in the helicopter industry.

Signing on behalf of Aviation Blade Services was its president David Stutesman, while Plus & Plus Technologies was represented by its chairman Khalid Emran Yusoff.

"We are currently working on setting up a joint venture company to facilitate the training of personnel and transfer of technology to Malaysia through Plus & Plus Technologies," Stutesman told reporters after the signing ceremony.

He said both companies expect the helicopter industry to grow in Malaysia. Currently, it is estimated that there are about 200 helicopters in service in the country.

A third collaboration was realised with the signing of an agreement between a Malaysian high-technology company, Dectra Sdn Bhd, and Australian software company Mincom Pty Ltd.

Under the agreement, both companies will jointly offer the military forces in Malaysia automated military logistics systems.

"We are seeking to provide a military logistics solution that will significantly enhance the combat capability of the Malaysian Armed Forces and also enhance inter-operability between the armed forces of Australia and Malaysia," Dectra executive director Major Gen (Rtd) Datuk Ahmad Ibrahim said.

At the signing, Dectra was represented by Ahmad Ibrahim and Mincom by its director (defence business) Desmond P. Sherman.

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