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Aerospace Association born

DEFENCE players yesterday laid the foundation for a global partnership with Malaysian companies, thus spearheading the launch of the Malaysian Aerospace Industries Association.

In conjunction with the launch of the association, there were four contract signing ceremonies and a partnership agreement at the Mahsuri Function Room.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad witnessed the ceremony, described as a landmark on Malaysia's road to developing the aerospace industry.

The contract signing ceremonies were between United Kingdom's BAE Systems and SME Aerospace; Europe's Alenia Aerospazio and SME Aerospace; Japan's ShinMaywa Industries and SME Aerospace.

The fourth contract signed was between the Malaysian Government and Airod Sdn Bhd. The partnership agreement was between BAE Systems and CTRM.

The BAE Systems-SMEA deal saw the local company being awarded a long term contract to manufacture the wing leading edges and carriage assemblies of the BAE Systems RJ/RJX regional jet commercial aircraft.

The contract enables SMEA to be the sole supplier of these parts for the remaining life of the aircraft.

Valued at roughly RM45 million, the contract initially involves the supply of 54 aircraft sets of the assemblies concerned, expected to be fully delivered over a three year period.

All the manufacturing tasks would be carried out at SMEA's fully certified aerospace manufacturing facility in Sungai Buloh.

SMEA has the distinction of being BAE Systems only "Preferred Supplier" in the Asia Pacific region.

Representing BAE Systems was Sir Charles Masefield, the company's group marketing director, while SME Aerospace was represented by its group managing director Tan Sri Ahmad Johan.

SME Aerospace's second contract concluded today would see the company manufacturing Alenia's aircraft forward lower lobe assembly.

The forward lower lobe is a conventional aluminium alloy structural assembly made of sheet metal formed details and some CNC machined parts.

The ShinMaywa contract would see SMEA being certified to provide Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft machined parts.

ShinMaywa is Japan's aerospace company which makes aircraft parts for Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Gulfstream and Japan's Self-Defence Force.

ShinMaywa aircraft engineering company director T. Ohashi and SME Aerospace CEO Lt Col (Rtd) Ir Chee Eng Boon were signatories on the contract.

The contract concluded between Airod and the Government entails stretch modifications and avionics upgrade of the RMAF's C130H Hercules aircraft.

To ensure total success of the programme, AIROD would team up with Lockheed Martin Aeronautical System based in Georgia, USA, for technical assistance and original equipment manufacturer quality equipment.

Ministry of Defence secretary-general Datuk Hashim Meon represented the Government, while Airod Sdn Bhd was represented by its president Ahmad Johan.

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