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Buryatia-Aviation

BURYATIA WANTS TO SET UP AVIATION CENTRE IN MALAYSIA

PUTRAJAYA, July 5 (Bernama) -- Buryatia plans to set up an aviation centre in Malaysia to market its helicopters in the region, said President of the autonomous Russian republic Leonid Vassilievich Potapov.

He said establishment of the proposed regional centre was the republic's top priority project because of its good potential.

"We have big market in the region...we sell helicopters to Sri Lanka, China and several other countries in the region," he said.

Potapov told reporters this through an interpreter after calling on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his office here.

Locating the proposed centre in Malaysia would also enable good after-sales service besides being mutually beneficial to both Malaysia and his country, he said.

He said he discussed the proposal with Dr Mahathir during their 30-minute meeting which was also attended by the Russian ambassador here Alexei D. Zhoukov and AIROD Sdn Bhd and Aerospace Industry Malaysia president Tan Sri Ahmad Johan.

Malaysia bought two Buryatian-made M117 helicopters costing more than RM60 million last year for the Fire and Rescue Department.

An AIROD delegation also visited the republic last year to evaluate the viability of the proposed aviation centre in Malaysia, said Potapov, who arrived here on Friday for a six-day visit.

The Buryatian president said he also encouraged Malaysian investment in the republic's mining, timber-processing and tourism sectors.

Buryatia, situated along the eastern shore of Lake Baikal, has substantial deposits of zinc, gold, bentonite, lead, graphite and marble.

Seventy-two per cent of the republic is forested.

"Lake Baikal contains about 20 per cent of the world's fresh water...it's deepest in the world and 365 rivers are flowing into it. We expect 1.2 million tourists in future," said Potapov.

The republic admired Dr Mahathir's strong leadership and international stature, he said.

Potapov extended an invitation to the prime minister to visit Buryatia next month.

-- BERNAMA

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