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PM to launch association uniting aerospace industry at exhibition

PETALING JAYA, Fri. - An association bringing together the country's aerospace industry players to avoid an overlap in their operations and activities will be launched next month.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to launch the Malaysian Aerospace Industries Association during the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition on Dec 2.

To be headed by Airod Sdn Bhd president, Tan Sri Ahmad Johan, the association has so far attracted the country's 20 major aerospace players, with more expected to join soon.

Among the major companies in the association are Airod, SME Aviation Sdn Bhd, Aerospace Industries Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Composite Technologies Research Malaysia Sdn Bhd and Aerospace Technology Systems Corporations Sdn Bhd.

The association's vice-president, Lt Jen (Rtd) Datuk Seri Mohd Yunus Tasi, said today the association was trying to attract more companies into joining the body.

However, he said, this was difficult as not many were aware of the association and its benefits.

"For starters, it will be easier to deal with the Government or any foreign company if we operate as a body. This will put us on a stronger footing.

"Additionally, the association will also serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas and networking with foreign aerospace players," Mohd Yunus told reporters when witnessing a flight demonstration of the Mi-8 helicopter at SME Aviation's premises yesterday.

Mohd Yunus said the association would also complement the Government's aspirations to turn the country into an aerospace hub by the year 2015, through the National Aerospace Blueprint.

"As the Government has its target, the association can serve as a guide to ensure that all aerospace companies in Malaysia head towards a single direction," he added.

On Malaysia's potential move into aircraft manufacturing, Mohd Yunus, who is Aerospace Industries Malaysia president, said initial emphasis should be the manufacture of aircraft components.

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