

04 DEC 1999

Mahathir-Russia

SEEK TIE-UPS WITH RUSSIAN COMPANIES, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged local aerospace companies to seek partnerships with Russian firms specialising in the field.

The Prime Minister said there would be more partnerships with Russian companies in the future because they looked at Malaysia as a good partner in the region.

"Our business people in the aerospace industries should look at the Russians also in order to find out how much they can contribute into our knowledge about aviation and also on how much we can work with them," he said at a press conference at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said they should also look into the possibility of working together in the marketing of Russian products in this region.

The Prime Minister said the facilities at the KNAAPO aircraft production plant in Khabarovsk were impressive. He visited the plant during his tour of the Russian territories last August.

KNAAPO, which produces civilian and military aircraft including the Sukhoi 30KI air superiority fighter showcased here, is among the 50 Russian companies taking part in the LIMA show. Russia is the largest participating group at LIMA '99.

He said there were no weapons procurement agreements made at the show but there were many proposals to sell "aircraft and battle equipment but we want to study and see if there is a need to buy".

He said Malaysia needed equipment for peacekeeping duties and also needed to keep up with skills.

"We cannot allow the armed forces to be neglected; they must know the latest developments. The armed forces will be very compact but also very well equipped," he added.

The show, involving some 1,000 local, regional and international companies, was opened on Dec 1 by Dr Mahathir.

The maritime segment of the six-day event is organised by HW LIMA while the aerospace sector is being managed by LIMA Le Proton.

-- BERNAMA  
team/gm yby