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Business as usual for ACM despite slowdown

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IT'S business is as usual for Asian Composite Manufacturing Sdn Bhd (ACM) although its only customer, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group, is facing a possible slowdown in the aircraft manufacturing business following the effects of the September 11 attacks in Washington and New York on the global aviation industry.

The Malaysian-American composite parts manufacturing venture started manufacturing and shipping parts to the Boeing facility in the US beginning last June.

"We are not manufacturing at full capacity yet and as such, we do not see the impact in the near term," its chairman Syed Tamin Syed Mohamed said.

Parts manufactured at ACM's facility at Bukit Kayu Hitam, Kedah, are already" flying on a 747-400."

ACM is a joint venture between Sime Darby Bhd, Naluri Bhd, Hexcel Corp of the US and Boeing. Each company had pumped in US\$10 million (US\$1 = RM3.80) into the joint venture. The facility will be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on November 9.

Syed Tamin, who is the managing director of Sime Darby (Plantations Division), said ACM is initially concentrating on producing parts for Boeing's commercial aircraft but the possibilities are endless for the company.

ACM may be one of the many beneficiaries of the US government's move to increase its defence budget and spending if the company decides to venture into manufacturing composite parts for fighter jets and other defence hardware.

"Our concentration right now is on producing parts for commercial aircraft. There is a possibility where we may supply parts for Boeing's sonic cruiser, which may come into production by 2007 and also venture into manufacturing composite parts for the defence industry and for the third parties such as Airbus," he added. Boeing is also the airframe maker of the F/A18-E/F Super Hornets.

Syed Tamin described ACM as an industrial partnership between Malaysian and American companies. "What we have is a facility that is of global standards, producing quality composite parts. And our workers are Malaysians," he said.

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