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Mahathir-LIMA (Eagle)

DR MAHATHIR LAUNCHES M'SIAN-MADE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE

LANGKAWI, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched the Malaysian-made Eagle Airborne Reconnaissance Vehicle (ARV) at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA '01) here.

Manufactured by the Melaka-based government-owned company Composites Technology Research Malaysia Sdn Bhd (CTRM) in partnership with Excelnet Sdn Bhd and BAe Systems of the United Kingdom, the ARV can be used both for military and non-military purposes.

Military-wise it could be used for incursion detection, monitoring of troop movement, borders, terrorist activities and intelligence gathering while its non-military applications include coastal surveillance and monitoring of open burning, illegal logging, piracy and movement of illegal immigrants.

The RM47-million project developed for the Malaysian Armed Forces consists of three Eagle aircraft, a ground control station and a remote receiving station.

The 6.4-metre two-seater aircraft with a cruising speed of 120 knots and a flying radius of 250 km can be manned or unmanned. It can go for 10 hours non-stop flying before refuelling.

Recalling how the project started, Dr Mahathir said BAe Systems Group Marketing Director Sir Charles Masefield suggested that the Eagle ARV fly without pilot.

The prime minister said at present there were only small types of unmanned aerial vehicles aircraft useful during both war and peacetime.

While congratulating CTRM for realising the project, he hoped the company would keep the price of the Eagle ARV low so that many countries could purchase them.

Dr Mahathir later witnessed the performance and capabilities of the Eagle ARV which was pilotless for 10 minutes and took real-time images near the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, the venue for the aerospace segment of the LIMA '01.

With a surveillance system mounted in its underbelly, the aircraft provides the operator with an unobstructed 360-degree field of view.

BAe Systems supplied the Eagle ARV its electronics and associated systems while its modification and systems integration were carried out jointly by Excelnet, a local engineering design provider and BAe Systems.

The Sultan of Brunei, Sir Charles and CTRM's chief executive officer Tan Sri Dr Chen Lip Keong were also present at the launch.

-- BERNAMA

JM RYN