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LIMA (Wrap-up)

LIMA, CATALYST FOR COUNTRY'S AEROSPACE AND MARITIME DEVELOPMENT

LANGKAWI, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- The Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA '01) Exhibition concluded today and will continue to be the catalyst for the country's aerospace and maritime development.

Since the inception of LIMA 10 years ago, a lot of changes have taken place in both areas, which advance the world's leading edge technology.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said LIMA has played a vital role in spearheading Malaysia's participation in both industries.

For the space programmes, Malaysia launched Malaysian East Asia Satellite (MEASAT) in 1996 and jointly built its microsatellite TiungSAT-1 which was put into the orbit last year.

Director of Astronautic Technology Sdn Bhd Prof Datuk Dr Mazlan Othman said eight small satellites, some would be built locally, would be launched within the Eight Malaysian Plan.

Malaysia's involvement in the space programmes is for the betterment of its peoples as data obtain from space will be used among others for education, environmental management, natural resources management, communications and entertainment, she said.

In the aerospace industry, Malaysia is no longer a mere user or spectator as a lot of aerospace companies have mushroomed over the years.

They are not only manufacturing aircraft components but also entering aerospace design, producing flight simulators and light aircraft such as Eagle and MD-3.

The latest inventions include the development of unmanned aerial vehicle which could fly 10 hours non-stop before refuelling at cruising speed of 130 knots within the radius of 250km.

SME Aerospace Sdn Bhd Chief Executive Officer Lt Col (Rtd) Chee Eng Boon said the mindset of the people have changed over the years and the country has a workforce which is willing to learn the advanced technology and produce the desired results on par with other big players in the industry.

The government's commitment and back-up in terms of tax, policies, infrastructure and institution, such as the establishment of Malaysian Aerospace Council chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Dr Mahathir Mohamad, could contribute further to the development of the industry, he said.

Director of Marketing and Public Affairs for BAE System Mark Ritson believed Malaysia could become a major aerospace player in the next 20 years considering its resources, technological capabilities and the work culture of its people as well as strong government's commitment.

There are also some achievements in the maritime sector such as the development of Made-in-Malaysia military fast troop vessel which can be redesigned into multi-role vessel for surveillance and tourism.

Progresses were also made in the development of maritime simulator and navigational equipment such as sonar systems as well as digital and analog wireless communication products.

Sapura Holdings Sdn Bhd Senior Vice President (sectoral for defence and security and international business) Wan Shaharuddin Wan Mahmood said the local maritime technology could now match the foreign technology.

-- BERNAMA

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