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LIMA-Satellite

LOCAL COMPANY TO DEVELOP SATELLITE CAMERA AND ORBITAL VEHICLE

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LANGKAWI, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- A Malaysian company will sign several Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) during the Langkawi International Maritime and Aeospace Exhibition (LIMA 2001) to develop and build among others, an orbital transfer vehicle and ultra-sensitive satellite cameras.

A government-owned company, Astronautics Technology (M) Sdn Bhd (ATSB) would become the pioneer in developing the transfer vehicle as before this no other company in the world had built the machine.

An ATSB official told Bernama the vehicle which was named SPORT or (Small Payload Orbit Transfer) Space Vehicle would be developed and built jointly with a United States company, AeroAstro.

"SPORT is a space vehicle used to transfer small satellites from one common pre-launched orbit into another customised or specific orbit," he said when met at Mahsuri International Exhibition Center (MIEC), here today.

ATSB which was given the responsibility by the government to spearhead its drive to acquire outer space technology successfully launched Malaysia's first microsatellite, Tiungsat-1 into orbit from Baikonur, Kazakhstan last year.

"SPORT is a flexible, low cost and highly reliable orbit transfer vehicle ideally suited to deploy a wide range of spacecraft into various orbits," said the official.

He said, the expected launch of the first SPORT vehicle into the designated orbit was scheduled for the end of next year, the second launch in the middle of 2003 and the third launch at the end of 2003.

The official said, the signing ceremony would be held on Wednesday.

The project to develop a satellite camera named "Medium Aperture Camera" or MAC, a high resolution electro-optical camera for a small remote sensing satellite, meanwhile had started.

"MAC offers extensive applications including agriculture, forestry, mapping, national security, transportation, utilities and resource management," said the official.

He said the project would be undertaken in collaboration with a South Korean company, SaTReCi Co Ltd.

The satellite which would carry MAC is slated to be launched into orbit within two years, he said.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is scheduled to be present at a ceremony here to mark the first anniversary of the launch of Tiungsat-1 in Baikonur on Oct 11.

The ceremony is themed "Tiungsat-1:From Inception to Inauguration".

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