

# *Superscooper struts its stuff*

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## PM witnesses 'best fire-fighting craft' at work

By FARIDAH BEGUM

KUALA LUMPUR: It was just another day at work for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as he strolled the well-kept lawns of the Mines Business Waterfront yesterday.

The day, however, marked his 21st year in office as Prime Minister.

It had been a long day, yet he patiently waited at the edge of the lake, which was once the biggest tin-mining area in the world, waiting for a demonstration of the much-talked about Bombardier 415 Multi-Purpose

Amphibian aircraft.

The aircraft, because of a technical delay, took off from the KL International Airport late but an hour later it was at the Mines Resort Lake to show off its capabilities in the air and on water.

Unperturbed by the delay, Dr Mahathir smiled and talked to the Bombardier management and other guests, including Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding and Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk M. Kayveas.

The Prime Minister was briefed on the aircraft - a

yellow and red beacon in the sky - when it turned up.

It took a turn before landing on the lake and when its doors opened, four firemen in wetsuits emerged to demonstrate a rescue operation.

The multi-purpose and multi-mission amphibian aircraft is said to be the best fire-fighting craft in the world.

The aircraft, which costs RM120mil each, is being considered by the Fire and Rescue Department of the Housing and Local Government Ministry.

Also known as a Superscooper, it can be used for forest fire-fighting, civil protection, maritime intervention and coastal patrol.

It can scoop up to 6,000 litres of water from a body of water before taking off and letting the water fall onto fires like a gigantic spray of foam to douse the flames.

It also has the ability to douse fires from a height in a meandering manner, called the snake move.

The Bombardier 415 is an amphibious plane that offers great endurance and speed to intervene in coastal and

rescue situations.

It is equipped with surveillance sensors and a mission sensor coverage that allows an electronic search from a height of 762m.

Bombardier, a Canadian company, is also involved in aerospace, recreational products and transportation such as the making of light rail transit vehicles.

To date, it has sold the Bombardier 415 to Spain (30 units), France (27), Italy (21), Croatia (five), Greece (26), Canada (64), the United States (three), Venezuela (two), Yugoslavia (five) and Thailand (two).