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Rocket-Russia

M'SIA WANTS TO USE ROCKETS FOR PUTTING OUT FIRES

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

MOSCOW, March 13 (Bernama) -- A leading Russian astronomical company will study the possibility of using rockets to induce rain to fight open fires in Malaysia.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding has asked the company, Mashinostroyenia, to conduct the study.

The company has launched many rockets and satellites since its formation 50 years ago.

"Now we are using aircraft to make artificial rain, and if possible we want to use rockets," he told Malaysian journalists who are here to cover Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit.

He said the proposal on using rockets was mooted because the Fire and Rescue Department was facing problems entering certain places to fight open fires.

Law, who visited the company's factory here yesterday, said the company was keen to conduct the study.

He said the proposal was part of Malaysia's efforts to enhance cooperation with other countries to develop space technologies.

Law said Malaysia was also keen to cooperate with Russia in undertaking projects in bio-technology, a field which the former is developing.

For this purpose, 60 scientists and officials from the two countries are attending a three-day seminar on bio-organic chemistry which began here yesterday.

"The interest shown by Russian scientists is very high, and there is a possibility we may cooperate in this field," said Law, who opened the seminar at the Shemyakin-Ovchinnikov Institute of Bio-organic Chemistry here.

He said the prime minister would visit the institute on Friday to witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Malaysian Science Academy and the Russian Science Academy.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to arrive here at 8.45 tonight (1.45am Malaysian time) for a three-day official visit as part of a three-country tour, which will also take him to Germany and Poland.

Law said the areas with potential for bio-organic cooperation are plants, animals, medicine, industries, environment, food, bio-pharmacy and molecular biology.

He hoped it could be done along the lines of the biotechnology partnership programme between Malaysia and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States.

"With MIT we have undertaken research on Tongkat Ali, coriander and oil palm, and we hope to forge similar cooperation with Russian institutions," he said.

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