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Thrusting Trent 900 to the fore

LANGKAWI: The Trent 900, the latest addition to the Rolls-Royce family of jet engines, can generate between 70,000 pounds and 76,000 pounds of thrust.

Showcased at Lima 2003, the Trent 900, an improvement on the Trent 800, is used among others by Agusta Westland's SuperLynx helicopters and the Boeing-Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche stealth helicopter deployed by the US Army.

The launch engine is already in place and will power the Airbus Industries' A380 passenger aircraft - the double-decker, super jumbo that could carry up to 555 passengers and would be the biggest such aircraft in the world when it comes into service in 2006.

Rolls-Royce regional director (Malaysia) David A. Jones said

the Trent 900 had reached all reliability targets and expectations in its test programme, adding that the company had even extracted a maximum of 88,000 pounds of thrust during the tests.

He said the company was keen on offering the Trent 900 to Malaysia Airlines (MAS), which is said to be interested in buying the A380. MAS is currently operating the Trent 800 series on its Boeing 777 aircraft.

Jones said his company would pursue the Trent 900 deal with MAS once the proposed purchase of the A380 is finalised by the national carrier and Airbus, as engine deals were usually sealed between the individual airline and engine manufacturer.

"The Trent 900, which was

developed nine months ahead of schedule last year, has so far been sold to Qantas, Virgin Atlantic and Singapore Airlines," he added.

On Lima 2003, Jones said Rolls-Royce was delighted with the interest shown by Malaysia and trade delegates in its products.

"We view Lima as an important platform to tap the region's growing market."

Rolls-Royce is among the premier jet engine makers in the world.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's official executive Bombardier jet plane is powered by a Rolls-Royce engine, as are the Hawks used by Britain's Red Arrows aerobatics team.