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Airbus confident in company's ability

COMPOSITES Technology Research Malaysia, a regular at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition, will be involved in three events this year.

The first will be the signing and handover of the completed fixed leading-edge components of the A380 Airbus, and a signing agreement with Eurocopter to do customisation work on B0105 helicopters.

Most importantly, it will launch its four-seater aircraft, the Lancair Columbia 300, for the Asia-Pacific region at this year's Lima.

Its chief operating officer, Francis Hiew, said the handover of the components to Airbus also marked a significant development as CTRM had managed to gain the confidence of the aircraft giant to produce and deliver these aircraft components on time.

He said the Airbus A380 was the latest and the biggest passenger aircraft in the world and it could accommodate 555 passengers and crew.

"Hence, being entrusted with this responsibility shows Airbus' confidence in the company and staff to manufacture fixed leading-edge components for the aircraft.

"Furthermore, by handing over the components at Lima shows our commitment to build and provide these components on time to the aircraft giant," he said.

The A 380 fixed leading-edge lower panels consists of 70 structural wing panels per aircraft.

Sixty-six panels are made from advanced carbon composite materials and the remaining from metal.

The handover marks another milestone for CTRM following the signing of an agreement on Oct 3 last year to provide these components. The signing of the agreement, which was held at CTRM's facility in Batu Berendam, Malacca was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Besides providing the fixed leading-edge component for the Airbus A380, it also provides components for the A 320 and A 300 Airbus aircraft.

He said the signing of an agreement with Eurocopter was another milestone for it as it was now working on aeroplanes and helicopters.

"This is our first venture with helicopters and by doing the customisation work, the company hopes to learn something new as what we did when we first acquired the Eagle aircraft," he said.

On the launching of the Lancair Columbia 300 aircraft, he said the aeroplane had been featured in the United States and had been accepted there since 1998.

However, he said, this was the first time that the aircraft would be launched in the Asia-Pacific region.

"The aircraft is a collaboration with Lancair Company, which is one of our subsidiary companies based in Oregon, United States.

The aircraft is equipped with the latest technology including having the Global Positioning System and autopilot. CTRM employs 540 people, mainly in Batu Berendam and also in Kuala Lumpur.