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CTRM delivers first sets of Airbus A380 wing components

COMPOSITES Technology Research Malaysia Sdn Bhd (CTRM) yesterday delivered the first sets of Airbus A380 wing components to Airbus UK, a leading aircraft manufacturer.

At an official handover ceremony witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, CTRM chairman Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Zaharuddin said the A380 programme was one of the most significant aircraft programmes to come to light in the past 50 years.

He said CTRM personnel had gained a lot of valuable experience with Airbus through the programme and expressed his continued support for the development of the Malaysian aerospace industry.

"CTRM achievements to date will help boost confidence among the Malaysian public and business sector of the potential within the aerospace business," he said at the ceremony held at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition.

Airbus executive vice-president Tom Williams said each major step in producing the first of these A380 aircraft would be recorded in aviation history.

"With the A380, our two organisations have forged an even stronger partnership. We have Malaysian and Airbus engineers working closely together on the design and engineering to develop this aircraft," he said.

The delivery of the first set of composite leading edge components took place almost one year after the original agreement was signed last October.

CTRM, through its wholly owned subsidiaries, Aero-Composites Technology Sdn Bhd and its associated company Excelnet Sdn Bhd, was awarded two contracts for the A380 programme.

Airbus UK awarded the A380 Fixed Leading Edge Lower Panels design and manufacture contract. BAE Systems awarded a contract to manufacture A380 INboard Outer Fixed Leading Edge.

In a statement, Airbus said Malaysia Airlines was one of the Asia Pacific customers for the 555 seat A380 double decker with orders for six aircraft.

Deliveries of the A380s are scheduled to commence in 2007.

Dr Mahathir later met the Red Arrows team and was presented with a jumpsuit by the British Minister of Defence Procurement Lord Bach, and a flight helmet by squadron leader Carl Jepson.

He was then led to the tarmac where he took flight in the Lancair Columbia.

Upon landing he immediately visited aircraft on show at the static display, such as the Allouette-111 helicopter with Keranamu Dr M on its side that was flown by Royal Malaysian Air Force chief Jen Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad yesterday.

Abdullah was on hand to greet him beside the Alouette, before Dr Mahathir then proceeded to aircraft like the Falcon 50, Sukhoi Su-30MK, Gulfstream 200 and the F/A-18E Super Hornets.

He even climbed aboard a Super Hornet, prompting onlookers to remark that the Prime Minister was "extremely fit" and energetic.