

01/10/2003

`Handover' of navy's first Super Lynx copter

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday witnessed the ceremonial handover of the Royal Malaysian Navy's first Super Lynx 300 MK100.

The helicopter, with its advanced onboard avionics, is one of six Super Lynx maritime helicopters purchased by the Defence Ministry in September 1999 from AgustaWestland to enhance the fighting capabilities of the navy's fleet.

With the acquisition, the navy has joined a select group of forces to use the Lynx for their naval helicopter requirements.

Among those present at the handing over ceremony were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, navy chief Datuk Mohd Anwar Mohd Nor and AgustaWestland managing director Alan J. Johnston.

Dr Mahathir later spent some time in the cockpit of the helicopter and was briefed on the avionics system in the Super Lynx by AgustaWestland representatives.

Meanwhile, Johnston said the company had trained navy pilots in the United Kingdom and had stationed two technical representatives, mechanical and electrical, to provide further training to navy personnel in Lumut.

The representatives would be stationed at the naval base for a year.

The AgustaWestland aircrew are also providing the second phase of pilot training as well as the second phase of continuation training for the Malaysian electrical, avionics and mechanical engineers.

Five of the six Super Lynx helicopters have been delivered to the navy while the sixth is being fitted with the Sea Skua guidance missile system in the UK.

Johnston said the helicopter would be delivered to the navy in October next year. He said AgustaWestland had also initiated a long-term partnership with seven companies in Malaysia to develop and enhance the defence industry here.

The five-year programme incorporating a range of high-technology projects are with Airod, Composites Technology Research Malaysia (CTRM), Defence Science and Technology Centre, ME & O Fleet Support, Sapura Advanced Systems, SME Aerospace and Zetro Technology.