

# Dr M keen on fighter jet programme

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**SACHEON:** Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed interest in South Korea's fighter jet programme.

He made his intent known during a visit to the Korea Aerospace Industries Ltd (KAI) here yesterday. He said he was eager to look at the advancement of the local aircraft industry.

Dr Mahathir spent more than an hour at the KAI facility, located about two-hour's drive from Busan.

Dr Mahathir, who is in South Korea to attend the Asean-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit in Busan, arrived at the

KAI facility by helicopter.

He was met on arrival by the South Korean Defence Acquisition Programme Administration Minister Wang Jung-hong and KAI chief executive officer Ahn Hyun-ho.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Darell Leiking.

KAI is a South Korean aerospace and defence company.

During his visit to the facility, Dr Mahathir was especially fascinated with the KAI-made FA-50 Light Combat aircraft.

The FA-50 is the combat variant of the T-50, South Korea's first indigenous supersonic aircraft and one of the world's few supersonic trainers.

KAI is also developing a 4.5-generation half-stealth fighter jet KAI KF-X, a joint South Korean and Indonesian effort.

The programme is spearheaded by South Korea, which holds 80 per cent of the shares. Indonesia joined in 2010 and has the remaining 20 per cent of the shares in the project.

Dr Mahathir also said South Korea had advanced greatly since he last visited the country in 2002.