

Weststar aims for RM10b contract by year-end

WESTSTAR Aviation Services Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of the Weststar Group, is aiming for at least RM10 billion worth of contracts by expanding its offshore helicopter transportation services to the oil and gas (O&G) companies by year-end. CEO Tan Sri Muhammad Ismail Jamaluddin said the company will provide two helicopters to an O&G company in Morocco next month as the next plan of the company's expansion programme. He said the company signed contracts in Thailand last month to supply six helicopters and is planning to expand services in Morocco next month. "We are also in the bidding process to win contracts in Mozambique," he told a media conference after signing an agreement for 10 AW139 intermediate twin helicopters with Agusta Westland, an Italy-based helicopter maker yesterday. Muhammad Ismail said currently the company has RM8 billion worth of contracts. The AW139 helicopters make up the majority of the Weststar Aviation Services fleet, he said, adding that "we have enjoyed a stellar track record. As Weststar Aviation Services is now moving forward in its international expansion efforts, we are delighted and confident to further cement Agusta Westland as our preferred helicopter partner." Muhammad Ismail said the company will receive its first three AW139 helicopters by the first-quarter of this year. Weststar is the first helicopter services operator worldwide chosen to benefit from the commonality in design across the entire AW139 family new generation helicopters. Asked why Weststar picked the AW139 model, Muhammad Ismail said the model not only has the same high performance flight characteristics and safety features but also shared a common cockpit layout, design philosophy and maintenance concepts like AW169 and AW189, which are bigger than AW139. Currently, Weststar Aviation Services owns a fleet of Sikorsky and AgustaWestland helicopters used exclusively to provide offshore support services for multinational O&G companies. — *Bernama*