

LIMA '13
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Defence Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi** (centre) receiving a model of a helicopter from Eurocopter's Olivier Lambert after witnessing the signing of a deal between **Weststar and Eurocopter** in Langkawi yesterday.

Weststar buys 10 copters

LANGKAWI: Weststar Aviation Services sealed deals for the acquisition of 10 helicopters at Lima 2013 to boost its offshore and general aviation capability in Southeast Asia and Africa.

Weststar group managing director Tan Sri Syed Azman Syed Ibrahim said the deals, costing nearly RM600 million, involved the purchase of six AgustaWestland AW139, two AW189 and two Eurocopter EC225.

Syed Azman signed the first deal with AgustaWestland international business managing director Geoff Hoon, witnessed by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk

Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

He then sealed the second deal with Eurocopter sales and customer relations senior vice-president Olivier Lambert, witnessed by Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

With the new deals, Syed Azman said his company had obtained models of up to 34 helicopters for offshore oil and gas operations and six for general aviation purposes, worth more than RM1.3 billion.

"With the additional fleet, we are venturing into Indonesia, Thailand, South America and the Middle East.

"At the same time, we have

clinched a deal in Mauritania for Tullow Oil and expect to begin operations there on May 15," he said at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre yesterday.

The Mauritania contract, he added, would involve the deployment of two AW109 helicopters and 42 personnel, including 14 pilots.

Syed Azman said the acquisition of new-generation long-range helicopters was part of Weststar's strategy to build an extensive fleet to be deployed around the world, and become a global player in the oil and gas exploration and production market.