

# Weststar Aviation buys 8 new helicopters to support expansion



(From left) AgustaWestland senior vice president commercial business Emilio Dalmasso, Mustapa, Syed Azman and AgustaWestland Malaysia managing director Vincenzo Alaimo at the signing in Langkawi

by **KAMALAVACINI  
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**WESTSTAR** Aviation Services Sdn Bhd, a member of the Weststar Group of Companies, has inked a contract worth RM550 million for the acquisition of six AgustaWestland AW139 and two units of AW189 helicopters.

Weststar group managing director Tan Sri Syed Azman Syed Ibrahim said the acquisition sets a new benchmark for quality in global offshore aviation for the company.

"The purchase of the additional AgustaWestland helicopters is to support our overseas expansion in Africa, South

America and Middle East," he said in a statement released yesterday.

The deal was signed at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition (LIMA) now ongoing in Langkawi, Kedah. AgustaWestland was represented by its international business managing director Geoff Hoon and the signing was witnessed by International Trade and Industry minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

Hoon described Weststar as one of AgustaWestland's "lead customers" and said he is confident that the long-range AW189 will deliver the same levels of safety, performance and cost ef-

fectiveness as the AW139.

Weststar is one of the largest offshore aviation services operator in South-East Asia with contracts totalling RM6 billion, the statement added.

It secured its first major international contract early this year with Tullow Oil in Mauritania. Its major oil and gas clients include Petroliam Nasional Bhd and ExxonMobil.

Weststar possesses a total of 24 offshore helicopters in service. The latest acquisition brings the total number of AgustaWestland helicopters ordered by Weststar since 2010 to 30, comprising 24 AW139s, four AW189s and two AW169s, according to the statement.