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HwangDBS

THE MASTERPLAN

Can mass rail transport be the catalyst for the success of Greater KL? Read on inside

RACING TO THE CHEQUERED FLAG

Malaysia's national carmaker is now in Formula One. Can it succeed where other names have fallen?

A TALE OF TWO NATIONS

Once master and servant, one has fallen by the wayside while the other now faces an uncertain future

Aiming High

The man behind a investment management success story – an exclusive interview with HwangDBS IM's Teng Chee Wai



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EYE ON THE SKY

SMART INVESTOR speaks to a local entrepreneur whose love for the open sky has led to his technologies being used by our local educational centres



Julian Tan

"I've been interested in aviation and aerospace since I was 10 years old, the time when I started designing my own model plane. The vastness and beauty of the skies and space has fuelled my lifelong passion to master the technology that gives us the ability to fly."

than 40 model planes and participated in numerous science exhibitions and competitions," Centaurus Technology's managing director Julian Tan told Smart Investor recently.

Centaurus Technology was founded in 2009 to provide aeronautics and autonomous technology and related consulting services, and its clients come from the civil, military and academic sectors. It also provides UAV aerial photography services to various companies such as factories and automobile dealers.

Yet, it continues to have strong ties with academia, especially with the likes of Tunku Abdul Rahman College, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, University of Nottingham Malaysia, and Universiti Islam Malaysia, amongst others.

Tan said that, while it was not uncommon for engineers to innovate and develop technology for commercial use, not many engineering firms have made in-roads into the education sector. He said that Centaurus Technology was one of the few companies to spot an opportunity in the educational sector.

He said that, in 2009, the company achieved a Malaysian first when it built the first AI robot based on vision technology and then successfully sold the product to Tunku Abdul Rahman College. "They have been using the robot to train their mechatronics students," he said.

"We have also been collaborating with Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia and Universiti Putra Malaysia in aerospace research and development," he said, adding that it all started with funding that the firm received from Cradle Fund.

According to Tan, Centaurus Technology had really grown by leaps and bounds since that first helping hand from Cradle to develop the company's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology. He credits Cradle for their help in commercialising his idea for unmanned aerial technology and for their unfailing assistance on facilitating networking and refining his business skills.

"Thanks to Cradle, we managed to get past some of the most prominent stumbling blocks for any business start-up. I feel very proud to have commercialised the UAV technology by selling it to Tunku Abdul Rahman College. It is good to think that something I created is now used to educate future generations of students," he added.

Centaurus Technology Sdn Bhd, a local firm that provides flight simulators and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), started out as a dream for a young man who yearned to be a pilot. Today, its technologies are being used to teach undergraduates in prominent tertiary institutes how to fly an aircraft.

"I've been interested in aviation and aerospace since I was 10 years old, the time when I started designing my own model plane. The vastness and beauty of the skies and space has fuelled my lifelong passion to master the technology that gives us the ability to fly.

"By the time I was 18, I had designed and built more



Tan said he was proud that his locally developed technology was on par with its foreign counterparts yet cost far less than the ones imported from abroad. He also highlighted Centaurus Technology's greater ability to provide local on-site technical support compared to foreign companies.

"In Malaysia, we supply flight simulator and UAV technologies to the educational sector, where students in the aerospace, aviation, and aeronautical fields are able to train in the use of flight avionics in a cockpit environment with a near to 180 degree view. The system used is of industrial standard, on par with that used to train actual pilots and for designing aircraft," he said.

"Via the UAV technology, students are also able to have a feel of the actual flight experience by wearing goggles on the ground where the display and flight information is fed in directly from unmanned aircraft flying above. Such UAV technology also enables researchers to collect flight data and perform flight analysis," he added.

Tan, who has a degree in aerospace engineering from University Putra Malaysia, stressed on the industry-standard accuracy of his flight simulator programme, which he had used and developed when he was 15, often spending up to eight hours a day on the programme.

"At the 1999 Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition, I finally had the chance to use an actual simulator used for train air force pilots, manufactured by Ikramatic Systems, who are now our clients. They were impressed that I able to perform 'touch and go' and precise landing unaided and refused to believe that I had no actual pilot training.

"It was also a great help when I applied to be an AirAsia pilot, a programme which I later withdrew from, due to financial reasons. Nevertheless, since then, I still use my own programme to train my flight proficiency in instrument flight rule conditions," he added.

Elaborating on his current projects and future plans, Tan cited his new mobile UAV

platform with anti-stall and high lift capability, and unmanned airship as his ongoing projects. He said he was on the lookout for funding to develop such an airship for outdoor advertising and surveillance and said that such an innovation would provide access to a virgin market in Malaysia with huge profit generating potential.

In the near future, he said he hoped to obtain enough capital investment to launch Centaurus Technology's first ever Malaysia micro-satellite via unmanned technology, as well as to develop an advanced vehicle for use in aerial search and rescue (SAR) operations.

"Centaurus Technology was named after the biggest constellation in the night sky and is in line with our goal of reaching outer space. I am still pursuing my dream of reaching space. My advice to other budding entrepreneurs? Correctly identify your goals and make sure you have the necessary passion, hard work, discipline, and endurance to achieve the rewards of success." **SI**



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