

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

AIRASIA TAPS VARSITY TALENT

Fernandes says tie-up with UPM a win-win proposition, particularly in research

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AIRASIA Bhd believes that having the right people will maximise its ability to grow, particularly in air traffic.

AirAsia group chief executive officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said the airline's big drivers were digital data scientists as they enhanced its operations significantly.

"For many years, we have been trying to grow our air traffic. We see the enormous amount of talent in universities. We are harnessing the talent to do research for us, which will help us grow," he said after launching the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) livery on an AirAsia plane, here, yesterday.

Fernandes said the airline's

partnership with UPM was a win-win proposition, particularly in research, as the best students from UPM would do internships with AirAsia.

"We have also unleashed talent through the CEO's faculty programme in UPM.

"It was not just for the benefit of the students, but also for corporate leaders to learn what universities can give them."

Fernandes said there was much AirAsia could do with the university, adding "we unearthed something that we never thought about before".

UPM's livery on AirAsia's Airbus A320-200 aircraft is a celebration of the carrier's partnership with the university.

With a budget of US\$50,000 (RM210,350), the livery was designed by UPM's Faculty of Design and Architecture.

"As UPM's strategic partner,



Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh (fifth from right), together with AirAsia group CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes and UPM vice-chancellor Professor Dr Aini Ideris (fourth from left) at the launch of the UPM livery in Sepang yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

AirAsia has set aside the commercial aspects of this project and stressed the importance of knowledge and why institutions of higher education should be uplifted," said UPM vice-chancellor Professor Dr Aini Ideris.

Aini said through this non-commercial initiative, AirAsia had provided a platform for UPM in the field of design, creativity and art for high-impact projects.

Fernandes said Airasia was al-

so working on other initiatives that would benefit the university and the airline, including student and staff mobility, an internship for students as well as executive and research programmes on aerospace.