

## **APFT eyes Asia-Pacific market** - *Saturday March 5, 2011*

MAIN-market bound flight education and training academy, APFT Bhd, is looking to expand its business and services in the Asia-Pacific region.

"We're looking at the region. Currently, the demand for pilots is not only from MAS (Malaysia Airlines) and (low cost carrier) AirAsia, but also from other regional airlines," says APFT director Arif Faruk, who is also a shareholder and co-founder of the company.

Last month, it was reported that local graduate pilots were hit by job shortages. Arif says the demand for local pilots is mainly from MAS and AirAsia.

A likely reason the graduate pilots are not hired is that they "did not fit the profile," according to Arif.

"That is why we need to expand. We want our students to be able to have access to a larger market in the region."

Arif, who is an aeronautical engineer by profession and a qualified pilot, says APFT will be participating in exhibitions in Hong Kong and Indonesia over the next few weeks in an attempt to promote business there.

APFT has plans to expand its flight and education training expertise in India via a joint partnership there. Arif says the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation, Indonesia (DGCA) has already given its approval to APFT to conduct training for Indonesian cadets, adding that the company is also increasing marketing efforts there.

Arif notes that airlines worldwide are increasing their aircraft fleets and this will in turn spur the demand for pilots. Demand for pilots will be greatest in the Asia-Pacific region, he reckons.

According to the company's prospectus, which includes a report from independent market research company Protg Associates, global delivery of new aircraft is projected to increase to more than 50,000 for the period between 2009 and 2028.

"The Asia-Pacific region has the greatest demand for passenger aircraft with projected delivery of more than 16,000 new aircraft or 32%," it says.