

aae tbe

LIMA-Mahathir
MALAYSIA TO MANUFACTURE GERMAN-DESIGNED AMPHIBIOUS AIRCRAFT

LANGKAWI, Dec. 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is to manufacture a German-designed amphibious aircraft in Pulau Pinang next year, the latest addition to its infant aerospace industry, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced today.

The twin-engined Dornier Seastar CD2, a 14-seat aircraft, would be produced entirely in Malaysia by a consortium of companies led by Aerospace Industries Malaysia (AIM).

"This aircraft has enormous scope for sales in the Asia-Pacific region, being useful both for maritime patrols, search and rescue missions as well as for lake and island resorts," Dr Mahathir said when opening the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) 1993.

This is Malaysia's third aircraft manufacturing project after the Eagle X-TS, a light all-composite aircraft, and the Swiss-designed Datwyler MD3-160 two-seater aerobatic trainer aircraft.

Dr Mahathir also announced that the Government had approved a Composite Manufacturing Zone (CMZ) in Melaka in efforts to promote composite product manufacturing in Malaysia. -- more

SAG LDB

▼07/12/10-09MST

R GE 07-12 00180 EA402

aae tbe

LIMA-Mahathir 2 Langkawi

The CMZ would contain a centre for aerospace industries with Eagle Aircraft Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. taking the lead, a non-aerospace products manufacturing centre with Talon Malaysia as a key tenant manufacturing hockey sticks from composite materials and an advanced composites laboratory to provide research back-up for companies located in the zone.

Dr Mahathir said: "We look forward to having more companies, both local and foreign, joining us at the CMZ.

"Composites could be used in the manufacture of many sporting items, marine vessels, fittings for trains and vehicles and all containers where payload and strength are major considerations."

Malaysia's low-cost highly-skilled workers were a great asset in manufacturing with composites, he added.

Dr Mahathir said with the manufacturing of the three aircraft, Malaysia had embarked on new areas of technology with very stringent quality requirements.

The demands of the aerospace industry also required that the Malaysian workforce be extremely conscious of quality in the whole production process.

-- more

SAG LDB

▼07/12/10-16MST

R GE 07-12 00190 EA403

aae the

LIMA-Mahathir 3 Langkawi

He added: "These are undoubtedly small beginnings. But then the U.S. entered the aerospace industry with the Kitty Hawk, an aircraft that is even more primitive than the three aircraft I have mentioned.

"In a century's time we may have our Boeing and McDonnell Douglas counterpart, God willing. But a beginning has to be made. And three small aircraft make a good beginning, modest though they may be."

The Eagle X-TS was manufactured by Eagle Aircraft Malaysia, a joint venture between Petronas and government-owned Composite Technology Research Malaysia.

The first-production model of the Eagle X-TS, suited for leisure flying and surveillance work, rolled out of its Australian facility in Perth last October and it would eventually be built entirely in Malaysia.

Eagle Aircraft Malaysia has secured firm orders for six aircraft from its first customer, the Conservation and Land Management Authority of Western Australia.

The MD3-160 are produced by SME Aerospace which planned to have the first Malaysian-produced low-cost trainers flying before the end of 1994.

-- more

SAG LDB

♥07/12/10-36MST

CNS6299

R GE 07-12 00193 EA404

aae tbe

LIMA-Mahathir 4 Langkawi

Dr Mahathir, who also spoke on Malaysia's efforts to develop maritime industries, said there was great potential in pleasure craft production.

Noting that the growing affluence of Malaysia and its neighbours would undoubtedly create demand for such craft, he urged local and foreign entrepreneurs to look into the possibility of developing Malaysia as the regional centre of pleasure craft production.

"With more such craft in local waters, there will be increasing need for marinas and boat maintenance facilities," he said.

He also said in order to meet the demands of industrialisation and new technologies, changes would be made to the education policy and new courses would be offered by institutions of higher learning, government and private sector.

The government, he said, spared no effort to provide the necessary support facilities to the private sector keen to invest in high technology ventures and it responded quickly to investors' needs.

Dr Mahathir said LIMA was not just another aerospace or maritime show as almost every country in Asia now held such exhibitions. -- more

SAG LDR

▼07/12/10-43MST

R GE 07-12 00217 EA405

aae tbe

LIMA-Mahathir 5 (last) Langkawi

LIMA was still relevant and special "because it is held in a region with the fastest growing economy; people in this region are now more affluent and are not only travelling more but are actually beginning to regard ownership of private jets and luxury boats as essential for business and for pleasure," he added.

He said the series of LIMA exhibitions Malaysia planned to stage were also aimed at challenging Malaysians to respond and be pro-active to the demands of a technology-driven world.

"Malaysia cannot afford to be left behind. In a competitive world there can be no complacency. Alertness and a willingness to venture into new fields are the prerequisites of merely staying abreast," he added.

Dr Mahathir hoped more international events would be staged in Langkawi, an attractive tourist destination as well as a vital investment location.

The opening ceremony, held at the exhibition centre adjacent to the Langkawi International Airport, was attended by Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Cabinet ministers and foreign dignitaries.

An aerial display of local and foreign aircraft was held after the opening ceremony. The maritime exhibition was held at the Kuah jetty. --

Bernamea

SAG LDB