

Dr Mahathir pilots locally-made plane

PREMIER PILOT ... "Very easy to fly," says Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after having piloted the first Made-in-Malaysia aircraft, the SME MD3-160 light aerobatic trainer, or Aerotiga, at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition.

The Prime Minister, who returned to Kuala Lumpur on Friday but made his way back to Lima '95 early yesterday, arrived about 8.45am from Kuala Lumpur on board a Canadair executive jet.

He was whisked to one of the two new two-seater Royal Malaysian Air Force training aircraft.

Pilot Mejar Zulkifli Hamid (right) from the RMAF Training College in Alor Se-



tar then briefed Dr Mahathir on the aircraft instruments before getting clearance to take off.

RMAF chief Lt-Jen Datuk Seri Abdul Ghani Aziz together with SME Aviation pilot Mej Zainal Abidin Aidid were in another similar plane accompanying the

Prime Minister.

The planes returned to Langkawi International Airport after spending about 20 minutes in the air.

Dr Mahathir then alighted and boarded a Nuri helicopter for Pulau Rebak.

Zulkifli, in an interview, said Dr Mahathir did all the flying in the air and flew five kilometres west of the airfield.

He said Dr Mahathir told him it was easy to fly the MD-3-160.

Abdul Ghani said the RMAF was honoured to have the Prime Minister fly the Malaysian-made aircraft.

The RMAF has ordered 20 MD3-160s to replace the existing Bulldog trainer aircraft.