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`Bulldog' light trainer aircraft gets new lease of life in the sky

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LANGKAWI, Mon. - The Kedah Flying Association has saved one of the best light trainer aircraft from being reduced to a mere display in the Royal Malaysian Air Force museum and has given it a new lease of life in the Malaysian airspace.

The Bulldog B100, a 200 horsepower two-seater airplane which was used by the RMAF for training of its fighter pilots, was decommissioned in 1995 and replaced by new light training aircraft, namely the Aerotiga MD3-160.

Fifteen of the planes were left idle at the RMAF Kepala Batas base and some were bound for the museum when the Kedah Flying Club intervened and requested the planes to be given to them.

Club captain Lt-Kol Shamsuri Alias said the idea to take the planes was mooted as the club saw the Bulldog was still capable of flying.

"There were still many aircraft spares left and the planes were still good for flying."

In March, the club took over eight of the planes, four of which are on display at the Langkawi Air Carnival 98.

The Bulldogs have been among the star attractions of the carnival with their yellow-and-red livery - the colours of the Kedah flag.

The plane also took centrestage yesterday as it led the fly-past which was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during the carnival's opening.

One of the three planes that led the fly-past was flown by Department of Civil Aviation director-general Datuk Zaini Omar.

Shamsuri said three more Bulldogs would be given to the club next year.

"We are using the planes for general training purposes of our members. At the moment, we have eight active students training for the Private Pilots Licence."

He said since the RMAF had still many leftover spares when the Bulldog was decommissioned, the cost of maintaining the aircraft was low and they only needed to pay for general maintenance and aviation gas.

The club also hopes to increase its fleet and set up a flying academy someday.

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