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Ling-Aircraft

MALAYSIAN-MADE AIRCRAFT CERTIFIED FOR EXPORT TO THE US

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- The first two SME MD3-160, the Malaysian-made aircraft certified for export to the United States of America (US), will be delivered to the customer at the end of next month.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the aircraft were now ready to be shipped to the US where SME Aero Inc, a joint-venture company in Tallahassee, would deliver the aircraft to the customer.

"This is indeed a very significant development following the signing of the Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA) between Malaysia and the US in 1996," he told reporters after the weekly post Cabinet meeting here today.

He said the SME MD3-160 was the first made-in-Malaysia and also Asian manufactured aircraft to be certified for export to the US under this new bilateral agreement.

With the delivery of the first two aircraft, SME Aero Inc would now be able to step up its sale of the aircraft in the US market, he said.

Dr Ling said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was expected to launch the first two SME MD3-160 designated for the US market at the end of next month at the SME Aviation hangar in Subang.

He said the Ministry of Defence had ordered 20 aircraft for use by the Royal Malaysian Air Force and Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara of Indonesia had also signed a contract to purchase 20 of the aircraft.

The SME MD3-160, marketed as "Aerotiga" in the US, is a two-seater all metal airplane ideally suited for training, leisure and aerobatics flying.

The aircraft costs between US\$150,000 (RM570,000) and US\$200,000 (RM760,000) each.

The aircraft is type-certified by the Malaysian Department of Civil Aviation (DCA), the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation (Foca), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the US and the Indonesian Director General of Air Communications (DGAC).

-- BERNAMA

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