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PM launches country's first aircraft for export to the US

MALAYSIA'S PRIDE ... Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad giving the thumbs up to the country's first aircraft - Aerotiga MD3-160 - which will be exported to the United States, while Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar look on.

The Prime Minister launched two of the aircraft at the Syarikat Malaysia Explosives Aviation Sdn Bhd production plant in Subang yesterday.

The planes will be shipped to a flying school in Florida under an agreement with the US Government.

Up to 100 of the planes have been ordered by the United States for its air force's basic flight training.

The Aerotiga is a two-seater all-metal aircraft powered by a 160-horsepower Lycoming O-320-D2A engine with a cruising speed of 130 knots ideally suited for training, leisure and aerobatics.

The aircraft was originally designed by MDB Flugtechnik AG of Switzerland.

SME Aviation acquired absolute rights to the project in 1993 and continued to design and develop the original certified-prototype to a fully certified mass production aircraft.

The two aircraft also received the Export Certification of Airworthiness issued by the Department of Civil Aviation in collaboration with the US Federal Aviation Administration.

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