

A success,

but can

be better,

says

Dr M

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PULAU LANGKAWI, Mon. — The Langkawi International Aerospace and Maritime exhibition (Lima '91), held here for the first time and with Government assistance, is a success, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said he was satisfied with the exhibition but added that there was room for improvement when it is held in the future.

Speaking to reporters after opening the maritime exhibition at Kuah jetty here, Dr Mahathir said the Government had to help out in the organisation of the event to ensure its success.

Dr Mahathir was asked whether he was satisfied with Lima '91 because of reported grievances from some exhibitors who claimed, among others, that fees charged to participate in the fair were high and that nippy administrative details were overlooked.

The Prime Minister said: "Lima '91 is a success. It is not easy to stage an international event of this size. At first we had only wanted to stage a small exhibition, but when the response from participants was good, we felt that it was better to have a bigger one."

Some participants said the fees at Lima '91, including fees charged for the static display of their aircraft, were high but Dr Mahathir said he did not think that this was so.

"Actually, we want to see the exhibition fully undertaken by the commercial sector. But the Government decided to get into it because we want it to be a success. So the Government has to come in to give its support," Dr Mahathir said.

The Ministry of Defence particularly has been instrumental in helping the organisers with the logistics and manpower needs.

Asked if the organisers, Le Proton Metalworks Sdn Bhd and AR Format Sdn Bhd, would be given the responsibility of staging the second Lima two years from now, Dr Mahathir said: "I think so ... but they must be given a chance to improve. There's a lot to do when organising such big events."

When told that Lima '91's success was attributed more to the Prime Minister's serious attention to it rather than the organisers' ability to stage such an event, Dr Mahathir said:

"This Prime Minister is always serious. Others should be serious as well. I always give encouragement to a lot of projects so that they can succeed. I'll keep an open mind on the organisers."

Asked to elaborate on his plans to turn Langkawi into the nation's centre for selected aerospace, the Prime Minister said the industries include avionics and the manufacture of some parts.

Land for the manufacture of these parts has already been acquired and the Government will provide basic infrastructure to get the ball rolling.