

28/07/1997

30 light planes taking part in air rally challenge

Sufi Yusoff

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - About 30 light airplanes, ranging from micro-lights to single and twin propeller engine aircraft will be making their way north beginning tomorrow in the Great Malaysia Air Rally challenge.

The event, to be flagged off by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is being held in conjunction with the first Langkawi Osh Kosh East Fly-In convention and exhibition.

The event, organised by Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd, which is also responsible for organising the aerospace component of the biennial Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition is a gathering of small light and recreational aircraft.

To be held from Aug 4-8, the event is aimed at promoting flying and to generate interest in general aviation among youth.

Le Proton executive director Yusof Manan said the Great Malaysia Air Rally will lift-off from the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Sungai Besi for the six-day race.

It will be split in two parts, he said, with the light airplanes flying from Sungai Besi to Kuala Terengganu while the micro-lights and the ultra-light aircraft will fly to Malacca.

Among the single and twin engine aircraft taking part in the event are the Malaysian-made Eagle 150 manufactured by Eagle Aircraft Malaysia and the MD-3 manufactured by SME Aerospace Sdn Bhd as well as the first Malaysian Experimental-Rakan Muda kit aircraft.

In Kuala Terengganu, the airplanes will be taking part in the micro-light air carnival in conjunction with Visit Terengganu Year 1997.

After four days in Kuala Terengganu, Yusof said the group will fly to Ipoh on Aug 2 where they will join the micro-light and ultra-light group for a night stop before proceeding to Alor Star the next day.

The group will spend one day in Kedah before flying off to Langkawi on Aug 4 in time for the opening ceremony of the Langkawi Osh-Kosh East Fly-In, by the Prime Minister.

Yusof said at the exhibition site proper, adjacent to the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre in Padang Mat Sirat, some 70 aircraft will be assembled from about five countries.

These include Australia, Czech republic, South Africa, Singapore and Thailand, apart from Malaysia.

Apart from private companies, government agencies participating in the event include the Royal Malaysian Air Force, Police Air Wing, Department of Civil Aviation and the Royal Malaysian Navy.

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