

05/08/1997

#### 48 light airplanes fly in for opening

7" by Ashraf Abdullah; Sufi Yusoff; Sharanjit Singh; Marhalim Abas  
THE buzzing sounds of propeller planes filled the air in Langkawi yesterday as some 48 light airplanes arrived at the Langkawi International Airport in Padang Matsirat to mark the opening of the first Langkawi Oshkosh East Fly-In convention and exhibition.

A far cry from the thunderous roar of jet fighters at the more famous Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition, the 48 light airplanes from eight countries are assembled at the site of the five-day event.

Gone are the jet-engined MiG-29s, Sukhoi-27, F-16s, FA-18s and F-15 fighters which have been replaced by piston and turboprop-powered Cessnas, Pipers, Pilatus and a host of other light aircraft and gliders.

Organised by Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd, the event is aimed at stimulating an interest in flying among the younger generation and cultivating the aviation culture in the future generation.

Among the aircraft participating are Malaysia's very own Eagle 150 manufactured by Composite Technologies Research Malaysia, SME Aviation's MD-3 and Phileo Aviation's RV-6.

The Rakan Muda Experimental kitplane, the Zodiac, is also among the aircraft participating in the event which ends on Aug 8.

Other countries participating in the exhibition include South Africa, Australia, Thailand, Singapore and the Czech Republic.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived at 9.30am to open the ceremony.

He was greeted by Le Proton executive chairman Datuk Mohd Radzi Manan, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

As soon as Dr Mahathir arrived, the majority of the airplanes participating in the exhibition began their fly-in into Langkawi from Alor Star to mark the start of the event.

The airplanes had earlier participated in the Great Malaysian Air Rally which was flagged off from Kuala Lumpur on July 28.

This was then followed by a remote-controlled aircraft display by world champion G. Naruke and Tom Takamatsu as well as a parachuting display by the Royal Malaysian Air Force.

Mohd Radzi said a total of 65 aircraft, comprising light airplanes, ultra and microlights as well as gliders, would eventually arrive for the exhibition.

"Some have been held back by the haze," he said.

Later, Dr Mahathir toured the exhibition area, taking time off to talk to the participants as well as to study the aircraft on display. He also flew onboard a Kedah Flying Club Cessna 172 single-engined aircraft.

(END)