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Lima '97 attracts record 769 firms, says Syed Hamid

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The fourth edition of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition has drawn a record participation of 769 companies, making it the third most popular aerospace exhibition in the world.

In 1995, the exhibition attracted 642 companies and was ranked fifth, after airshows at Farnborough in England, Le Bourget in Paris, Dubai and Singapore, in terms of the number of participants.

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar today said the number of companies confirming their participation in this year's Lima had exceeded the number achieved in 1995.

He said, 534 companies would participate in the aerospace segment while the remainder would take part in the maritime show.

To accommodate the increase in participants, Syed Hamid said that the exhibition space had been expanded to 21,000 square metres, from 7,000 square metres.

"At the moment, about 80 per cent of the exhibition space has been taken up. Additionally, the Langkawi International Airport's runway has also been extended to enable bigger aircraft to participate in the exhibition.

"As promotion for Lima '97 is still ongoing, we are confident that we will attract at least 800 companies from 38 countries, which is the target we have set to achieve.

"We are happy to note that we have achieved Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's vision of making Lima, among the world's most popular airshow," said Syed Hamid, who is also Lima organising committee chairman.

Dr Mahathir is expected to officiate this year's exhibition on Dec 2, at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, in the morning, before proceeding to Tanjung Malai, located nine kilometres from the Langkawi International Airport, where the maritime exhibition would be held.

For the first time since Lima's inception in 1991, the maritime segment would be held as a separate event.

Syed Hamid said that although the maritime segment would be held in Tanjung Malai, the focus of the exhibition would still be at the MIEC.

The United Kingdom will send the largest contingent, to occupy a total floor area of 1,500 square metres, followed by South Africa and the United States, with 1,000 square metres each.

Syed Hamid said he was happy to note that the preparation for the biennial event was going on, as scheduled.

"During the briefing, I was told that everything is going on smoothly. The main problems encountered during the last exhibition, including water, electricity and traffic condition on the island, have been addressed.

Apart from the static aircraft exhibition, Syed Hamid said several renowned aerobatic teams were also scheduled to participate, including the Red Arrows from England, and the Russian Knights from Russia.

Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd, the organiser of the aerospace segment, is also trying to bring in Thunderbirds from US, Elang Biru from Indonesia and Jordan's Falcon aerobatic team.

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