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Maritime segment gets overwhelming response

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EACH successive Lima exhibition intends to outdo the former.

It has come to be expected that succeeding shows attract a larger number of participants and visitors, occupy bigger exhibition space and show off better exhibits.

Lima '97 is no different.

Huswah Exhibition Sdn Bhd, the organiser of the maritime segment, says 238 exhibitors from 17 countries have been confirmed, while more than 10,000 visitors (trade visitors and members of the public) and 100 journalists are expected to attend.

A spokesperson from Huswah said in previous years, Lima's maritime segment only attracted 10 and 15 exhibitors, in 1993 and 1995, respectively.

"This year, we have 45 ships and the sailors alone number about 4000," he said.

While the venue may be the same legendary, scenic island of Langkawi, for the first time in the five year history of Lima, not only have the maritime and aerospace segments been split up, but also more interesting exhibits have been added to this year's show.

An exciting newcomer to this year's maritime show, and guaranteed to be a hit, are four submarines, one each from Russia, Turkey, Pakistan and France.

Stationed at the Star Cruises Port in Tanjung Malai, the venue for this year's maritime show, the submarines will showcase the latest in naval warfare technology.

Also anchored off Pulau Langkawi with equally impressive naval capabilities, will be a large gathering of warships from the navies of 13 countries, like France, Italy, UK, US, India, Pakistan and Turkey.

For its part, the Royal Malaysian Navy has confirmed the participation of a dozen warships including two newly acquired guided missile corvettes, KD Laksamana Hang Nadim and KD Laksamana Tun Abdul Jamil.

In his welcoming address for the maritime directory, Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar has described Lima's maritime division as an "ideal platform for the world maritime and related industries to showcase and market their products, technologies and services."

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, meanwhile said the exhibition on maritime matters complements the Government's effort to make Malaysia a maritime nation.

Also making its way for the first time to Malaysian shores is the Malaysia Challenge 1997, with prize money worth US\$100,000 (US\$1 = RM3.48) up for grabs. This, incidentally, is the largest prize purse on the international circuit.

Here in Langkawi at the invitation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysia Challenge sailing race will begin today.

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