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Syed Hamid-Lima

PARTICIPATION IN LIMA '97 CLOSE TO REALISING TARGET

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 (Bernama) -- A total of 534 companies have confirmed their participation in the aerospace exhibition while more than 200 had signed up for the maritime exhibition at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) '97 Exhibition in December.

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said the target for the two exhibitions were 800 companies.

He said this was a success as only 642 firms took part in Lima '95 in which equipment worth about RM700 million were sold.

In terms of countries, he said, 32 countries have confirmed instead of 34 in 1995. This year's target is 38 countries, which he is confident of achieving it.

Syed Hamid, who is also Lima '97 Main Coordinating Committee chairman, was speaking to reporters after chairing the Lima '97 Cabinet Committee meeting at his ministry.

Among the renowned companies which have confirmed their participation are Hawker Pacific (Australia), Bristol Aerospace and Bombardier Aerospace Group (Canada), International Aviation Group (China), Kockums (Denmark), Aerospatiale, Airbus Industrie, Arianespace and Thomson-CSF Group (France), Daimler-Benz Aerospace AG (Germany), Indian Aviation (India), Fincantieri (Italy), Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd (Japan), Kamov (Russia), Armscor (South Africa), Bofors AB (Sweden), Pilatus Aircraft Limited (Switzerland), FMC-Nurool Defence Industries Inc (Turkey), Kaman Aerospace Corporation, McDonnell Douglas and Lockheed Martin (United States) and British Aerospace PLC and GKN Westland Helicopter (Britain).

Besides Russia and Britain, which will send their Red Arrows acrobatic team, three or four other countries were also keen to take part in the acrobatic display but Malaysia had to limit the participation to certain countries only.

He said this year's Lima will see the attendance of more prime ministers and defence ministers worldwide.

He also said Lima '97 would be third biggest of its kind in the world in terms of its aerospace exhibition.

The latest information confirmed that Lima was only behind Le Bourget air show in Paris and Farnborough in Britain which is in the first and second placings respectively in the world.

"This means we have realised the objectives set by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to turn Lima into a world-class maritime and aerospace exhibition," he said.

He said more than 80 per cent of the exhibition space had been snapped up for the two exhibitions.

This year's Lima, the fourth biennial event, will be held at the 22,000 square metre Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre from Dec 2 to 7.

Syed Hamid said the maritime exhibition would be held at the Star Cruise jetty in Tanjung Malai which could accommodate 27 ships at a time while the aerospace exhibition is managed by Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd.

He said this year's Lima would give special focus on high technology integrated defence system to be introduced by Russia, France and Britain.

Syed Hamid said problems encountered in the last Lima such as power and water supply, short runway, radar system and narrow roads had been overcome.

The two-lane one-way road costing RM10 million in Kuah is expected to

be ready before the event while LADA Langkawi (Holdings) Sdn Bhd would buy two ferries costing RM7 million each to run additional services during the period.

Syed Hamid, who expressed satisfaction to the preparations made, said various promotions were held worldwide including through defence exhibitions abroad. -- BERNAMA

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