

03 AUG 1997

LEAD Rally-Aircraft

RALLY AIRCRAFT ARRIVE SAFELY AT DESTINATIONS

IPOH, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- A fleet of 19 light aircraft participating in the third lap of the Great Malaysian Air Rally '97 arrived at their destinations in Kedah and Perlis despite the haze after taking off from Sultan Azlan Shah Airport here this morning.

A Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) spokesman said eight of the aircraft landed at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Alor Setar, seven at the Batu Pahat airstrip in Perlis and four more at the Langkawi International Airport.

A glider, which was supposed to join them, could not take off due to poor visibility caused by the haze. It was expected to take off tomorrow morning for Langkawi, the spokesman said.

The aircraft were to have left for Alor Setar yesterday but it was put off due to the haze caused by burning forests in Indonesia.

This morning, the aircraft left in batches from 9.30am with refuelling stops at the army airstrips in Taiping and Sungai Petani, the spokesman said.

He said the aircraft had to take off early when the visibility was still good.

The haze was reported to be at 10,000m from the ground at 9.30am, dropping to 5,000m by 10am and was expected to worsen in the late afternoon, he said.

The air rally, which began from Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur, last Monday is a prelude to the Langkawi Fly-In 1997, dubbed as Asia's flight convention and exhibition involving manufacturers and pilots of light and ultra-light aircraft, from Aug 4 to 8.

The participants comprise aircraft manufacturers from South Africa, Italy, Germany, Singapore, Thailand and Australia.

The final lap will be from Alor Star to Langkawi on Monday where the aircraft will be welcomed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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