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A world of wonder for aviation fans

LANGKAWI, Sun. - The Langkawi Air Carnival 98 which was opened yesterday by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad attracted hundreds of visitors from the island and overseas today.

On the second day of the carnival at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, visitors were treated to aerial displays from aircraft ranging from the lightweight Eagle to the Royal Malaysian Air Force's F-18 Hornets.

Over 50 planes are on display, mostly sport recreation aircraft of private owners and flying clubs.

The exhibition, organised by the Langkawi Air Recreation Club with the support of the Department of Civil Aviation, is being held to promote awareness of aviation as a recreational sport, especially among the youth.

It also brings aviation enthusiasts, especially members of various flying clubs in the country, together to display their aircraft and to share their experience and expertise.

The president of the Johor Flying Club, Dr K.N. Singh said the carnival was among the many activities organised with the Department of Civil Aviation in promoting aviation to the general public.

"The Prime Minister had called for the creation of an aviation society and this kind of air show will go a long way towards promoting the concept."

He said that the shows gave many young people the chance to view aircraft closely and would help to deepen their interest in aviation.

He said many were still unaware there were flying clubs in the country which were open to them and offering attractive packages for pilot training, especially for the Private Pilots Licence.

The PPL is a requirement for those who want to fly for recreational purposes.

"It's not just about flying. It's also about character building because you have to be disciplined and organised as well during flying and when maintaining the aircraft," Dr Singh said.

Geoffrey Davis, who lives in Singapore and Hong Kong, but is here to display his Cessna 172 said one of the attractiveness of Malaysian aviation is its openness to recreational flying.

"I have found it very easy to fly around here, although much improvement is possible by reducing the amount of paperwork needed to fly here."

While the light aircraft took the visitors to the skies, the supersonic jet fighters took the visitor's breath away with dazzling aerobatics.

Today, the RMAF's MiG-29N's and F-18 Hornet fighters put up a performance which excited the crowd at the air show and also on other parts of the island.

Aside from this, the participants also took part in several aviation competitions such as spot landing, flour bombing, navigation, and aerobatic capabilities.

There were also parachute jumps, displays from the Federal Territory Parachuting Association, the Police, and also the RMAF.

The carnival ends tomorrow.

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