

06/08/1999

Breathtaking shows for Lima visitors

Kang Siew Li

VISITORS to this year's Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (Lima '99) are promised a breathtaking experience as they will be entertained by some of the world's best aerobatic performers.

The organiser of Lima '99 - Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd - is expected to bring for the first time a Harrier jump-jet, along with world-renowned aerobatic teams such as the UK's Red Arrows, the Netherland's MAT and the Australian Roullete to the show.

"We are still trying to get the Russian Knights to perform at the show. But the negotiation is on a government-to-government level," Le Proton executive chairman Datuk Mohamad Radzi Manan told a news conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said the uncertainty of the participation of the Russian Knights in Lima '99 remains high because the cost of bringing them over from Russia can easily amount to US\$1.6 million (US\$1 = RM3.80).

Lima '99 is scheduled to commence in Langkawi from November 30 to December 5. Le Proton is organising the biennial show for the fifth time since 1991.

As in past Lima exhibitions, Mohamad Radzi said, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to officiate at the opening of Lima '99, which will also feature a conference themed "Charting The Course Towards A New Aerospace Millennium".

To be held on December 1 and 2, the conference is co-organised by Le Proton and the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute.

"So far, about 600 companies from 42 countries have confirmed their participation in the aerospace exhibition, which sees the addition of four new countries namely Romania, Ukraine, Norway and Tatarstan," Mohamad Radzi said.

"However, we are not stopping just yet. We are targeting participation of at least 700 companies," he added.

About 650 companies from 38 countries participated in Lima '97.

Going by the response so far, Mohamad Radzi said he expects some 100 aircraft from various countries will be taking part in the show.

"One thing is for sure, this year's exhibition will definitely be bigger than Lima '97 where only 85 aircraft took part."

He also said Lima '99 is different from previous Limas in that there will be more Malaysian companies directly or indirectly related to the aerospace business participating in the show.

"Looking at the number of Malaysian companies that have already signed up for the exhibition, local participation has grown by as much as 50 per cent this time compared with Lima '97. So far, about 50 local companies have confirmed their participation, of which 35 are directly involved in aerospace technology," he added.

Mohamad Radzi said although the number of foreign companies participating in the show has not dropped, "some are requesting for smaller booth space".

"But it depends on the countries' internal situation. For instance, there has been a marked improvement in the participation of companies from the UK, France and Italy.

On the number of trade delegates that will be attending the show, Mohamad Radzi said: "We are inviting a total of 165 delegates from 35 countries this year, and they are mainly from the Asean region."

A total of 171 delegates from 28 countries attended Lima '97.

At the same time, Mohamad Radzi said, Le Proton is making efforts to attract nine associations of aerospace small- and medium-sized enterprises from the UK, France, Italy and Canada to exchange ideas and experience.

Meanwhile, Mohamad Radzi said less agreements, contracts and deals are expected to be concluded in this year's Lima compared with Lima '97, due to the current economic situation.

In Lima '97, less than 10 agreements, contracts and deals were concluded, which amounted some US\$2.7 billion.

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