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Editor's note

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SELAMAT Pagi. Many people once again took advantage of last Saturday's public holiday. I did the same but combined some work with a much-needed break. I went to Langkawi for the fifth Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition. This was the last show for the millennium on the beautiful island of legends and romance. Many people had come to expect Lima to showcase some of the world's best in both industries. In fact, a lot more people expect even more - a paid holiday where they can combine business with pleasure. If one were to plan one's trip for Lima carefully, one can really find enough of both. I met many people there who combined work with some family getaway. The fact that the show is held in Langkawi offers many advantages, one of which is that participants can also unwind, and unwind well.

This year's Lima was yet another success even though many people felt that the hangover from the general election had some effect on attendance. This was not necessarily true. I saw many people, corporates and otherwise, at Lima. They were making deals and many had made definite plans for one kind of investment or another. Lima doesn't only provide deals in the aerospace and maritime industries. There were also deals in the tourism business, infrastructure, supplies and services. The authorities responsible for Lima must take a deep look at the whole show and come up with something more comprehensive. There's a limit to what the two organisers - Le Proton Lima and HW Lima - can do in terms of promoting off-Lima business. By this I mean promoting of Langkawi as a major tourist attraction. While the two organisers travel abroad often to attend similar shows elsewhere to promote theirs, more needs to be done to promote Langkawi too. It will be mutually beneficial if the the two organisers can work together with other tourism related agencies to "sell" Langkawi. A more pro-active effort is needed, not just the casual display and distribution of holiday brochures. Brochures are nothing but a guide. They can be informative and attractive but nothing beats a trained tourism officer able to emphasise what the brochures show. Perhaps, Le Proton Lima, HW Lima, the Arts, Culture and Tourism Ministry, hoteliers, airlines and the Langkawi Development Authority can join forces to promote the next Lima, two years down the road. This exercise can be jointly funded and I'm sure everyone involve will find some profit in this in the long term.

Langkawi during Lima is one big festival. When the first Lima was held in 1991, it was greeted with much enthusiasm. The air show was one of the main attractions, which grew in stature and aircraft numbers since then. There was also a Miss Pantai Cenang held during one of the nights and it attracted many young hopefuls besides wolf whistles. A fun fair was held in Kuah and hotels came up with their own promotions. More hotels came up after that. Lima has helped put Langkawi on the international holiday map. More than that, Lima has helped to showcase Malaysia's organisational abilities in more ways than one in the true "Malaysia Boleh" spirit. But Lima needs an appraisal now so that the next one can create new excitement and help promote everyone's business. Lima is not short of supporters, none more committed than the man credited with the idea - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The time has now come for everyone involved in Lima to justify his or her faith in making Lima more successful for everyone in and outside the immediate Lima circle. Salams