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Mahathir-Lima

LIMA HAS SPURRED INTEREST IN AEROSPACE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- The Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) series of exhibitions has progressed through the years and spurred interest among Malaysians in the aerospace field, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said there was now a great deal of interest among the youth in the nation who were interested in flying and even in building their own experimental aircraft.

"The aerospace industry has also developed to a stage where we can manufacture wing parts and have airframe stretching capability and the capacity to do design work and also indigenous know-how in flight simulators," he told a news conference at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, here.

"We cannot build big aircraft but we can play a role in the design, construction and engineering of aircraft of various sizes...this development of the aerospace industry is faster than I had expected," he said.

He said Lima had paid off handsomely in terms of awakening the consciousness of Malaysians about flying, aircraft engineering and construction of aircraft and the like.

He also said that with the improvement in the economy, the government would allocate more funds for the development of the aerospace industry.

Malaysian participation in the Lima'99 exhibition was more significant because they had all come together in one place to show Malaysia's capabilities, Dr Mahathir said.

Transfer of technology and joint ventures between local and international companies had also increased since the first exhibition in 1991, he added.

The six-day show, which attracted some 1,000 local, regional and international companies, comprises two segments -- the maritime segment organised by HW LIMA and the aerospace segment managed by LIMA Le Proton.

Dr Mahathir, who is in Langkawi since the official opening on Wednesday, is scheduled to leave for Alor Setar tomorrow. The Lima '99 exhibition is scheduled to be closed by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

team/gm JK