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Russian aircraft coming for Lima

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - About 40 Russian-made aircraft ranging from fighter jets, helicopters to trainer aircraft are scheduled to be on display at this year's Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition, making it the largest gathering of such machines outside the former Soviet Union.

Organiser Le Proton Lima is trying very hard to make this a reality with 15 Russian aircraft already being confirmed for the show - which starts on Nov 30 and ends on Dec 5.

Le Proton Lima executive chairman Datuk Radzi Manan said the Defence Ministry was helping negotiate with the Russian Defence Ministry to get the renowned Russian Air Force's display team, the Russian Knights, to take part in the exhibition.

He said with the participation of the team, the number of Russian aircraft at Lima '99 would increase to 30.

"The rest are expected to come from the Ulan Ade Aviation plant. The company had indicated its interests to send its helicopters for the show following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to the plant in Russia's Far East Republic of Buryatia, last week," he said at his office after he signed a memorandum of understanding with the New Straits Times which is the the official newspaper of the show.

NST was represented by its group editor Ahmad A. Talib today. The paper had been the official newspaper of the show since its inception 1991.

Ahmad hoped the good relationship between the two, which started in 1991 with the first Lima, would continue to prosper.

He said the Lima series was not only a showcase of aerospace industry, but also has been successful in promoting Langkawi as a tourist haven.

Le Proton Lima is the organiser of the aerospace component of Lima, with HWA Lima Sdn Bhd as the maritime organiser.

This year's edition, themed Lima '99 as a kick-off to welcome the new millennium, has so far attracted more than 700 exhibitors from 42 countries, including four "new faces" from Romania, Ukraine, Norway and Kazakhstan.

To promote the show, Le Proton had participated in several aerospace exhibitions, the latest being the Moscow Aviation and Space Exposition held on Aug 18.

The Royal Air Force Red Arrows, the Australian Roulettes and a microlight team from MAT of Holland have confirmed their participation.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force is expected to display its front-line fighter jets, the MiG-29N and F/A-18D Hornet.

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