

26 NOV 1999

Russians

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING TO LANGKAWI

LANGKAWI, Nov 26 (Bernama) -- Russia and the former Soviet republics, the largest group of foreign participants at the LIMA '99 maritime and aerospace exposition, will be bringing some of the most sophisticated equipment available today including the Sukhoi 30KI fighter aircraft.

The sleek fighter built by KNAAPO of Russia will be making flying displays throughout the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition from Nov 30 to Dec 5 on the legendary tourist island of Langkawi.

KNAAPO's spokesperson here, Ridana Abdul Ghani, told Bernama the fighter is scheduled to arrive at the international airport here over the weekend prior to the show.

She said the Su-30KI is the latest incarnation of the proven and powerful Su-27 fighter and is bristling with new systems including inflight refuelling which would greatly increase its operating range.

The Sukhoi 27 is used by several air forces throughout the world including Russia, Vietnam and China.

Ridana said LIMA would be a debut for the Su-30KI outside Russia in the region. Russian aircraft on display here includes the Su-30K, Su-30KI and Su-25UBK combat aircraft, which will be flying in the skies of Langkawi for the first time.

She said the Su-30KI has twice the capabilities of the US-made F-16 Falcon and the F/A-18 fighter planes, and is claimed to be better than the US Air Force air superiority fighter, the Eagle F-15.

LIMA which has attracted nearly 300 international companies for the maritime segment and another 700-odd companies for the aerospace section, is scheduled to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Dec 1.

The aerospace segment will be staged at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC) in Padang Matsirat while the maritime segment will be held at Tanjung Malai, here.

There will also be elite aerobatic teams from Britain, Russia and Australia taking part in the show.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) will also send its Russian-made MiG-29N and the US-made F/A-18D aerobatic team which recently put up a show during the Formula One race in Sepang recently.

Under the auspices of the Russian state organisation Rosvoorouzheni, 34 companies from the Russian defence industry will be showcasing their latest designs and products in Langkawi.

Ridana said the Su-80 tactical transport aircraft, showcased as the best replacement for the Caribou-type aircraft, would also be highlighted by the Russian company at the airshow.

Also being staged are demonstration flights of the modernised Mi-8AMTSh multi-purpose helicopter from the Ulan Ude Aviation Plant and the Mi-17KF utility helicopter from the Tatarstan-based Kazan Helicopters.

The US Department of Defence said the US Air Force will deploy F-15 and F-16 fighter aircraft and the KC-135 air refuelling aircraft to Langkawi.

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