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Visitors throng expo halls, board ships

MOMENTUM for the Lima '99 maritime show at Tanjung Malai picked up yesterday as members of the public and visiting delegates thronged the exhibition halls and boarded ships that went on display.

Crowds began forming as early as 9am to get a feel of the maritime defence exhibition. Some walked all the way to take a closer look at some of the world's most modern naval fleets.

The Royal Malaysian Navy's KD Lekiu and French vessel FNS Siroco became the centre of attraction at the show, which was opened to the public today.

KD Lekiu's commanding Officer Commander Mohd Amdan Kurish had his hands full conducting tours for visiting delegates on board the RMN's latest frigate.

Four vessels were also berthed at the Awana Star Cruise jetty and were opened for public viewing.

Foreign naval vessels on display are the USS Vincennes (United States), FNS Siroco (France), BNS Osman (Bangladesh), KRI Pandgrong (Indonesia), PNS Nasir and PNS Tariq (Pakistan), BRP Dagupan City and BRP Heneral Apolinario Mabini (the Philippines), RSS Daring (Singapore) and HTMS Songkhla and HTMS Thayanchon (Thailand).

Leisure boats and yachts on display at the Awana Porto Malai resort marina enjoyed a fair share of public visits.

Boat lovers flocked to the Jalur Gemilang, which was displayed along with other ships.

The RM2 million ocean racer was captained by solo sailor Datuk Azhar Mansor, who created a world record by circumnavigating the world on an east-bound route. Azhar's feat has been recognised by the World Speed Sailing Record Council.

Later in the day, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad witnessed a series of official signing ceremonies at the resort.

Thirteen memoranda of understanding were signed between the Business Focus International group and a panel of European defence contractors.

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