

09 OCT 2001

LIMA-Display

LIMA 01 BEGINS WITH AERIAL DISPLAY OF VARIOUS AIRCRAFT

LANGKAWI, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- The biennial Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition 2001 (LIMA '01) started today with a stunning aerial display by several aircraft.

The six-day dual-services event, which was opened Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the morning, saw Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) aircraft performing the bulk of the aerial display.

This is because several overseas aerobatic teams like the Red Arrows of Britain and the Thunderbirds of the United States had withdrawn from the exhibition.

The RMAF's F/A-18D Hornet and MiG-29N pilots were first to display their aerial skills by performing several well-executed and often dangerous manoeuvres, drawing applause from the crowd which included foreign air force fighter pilots and business delegations.

Two of the RMAF's F/A-18D aircraft also performed an air-to-air refuelling operation using the KC-130 Hercules aerial tanker.

The display continued with two RMAF C-130H transport aircraft airdropping 200 troops from the Malaysian Armed Forces' Rapid Deployment Force (RDF).

The crowd was then entertained to a display of an aerial water bombing operation by the Russian-built Beriev BE-200 multipurpose aircraft.

The aircraft, which is also amphibious and constructed for fire-fighting, was built by Irkutsk Aviation, the same company which produces the Sukhoi's SU-30MK fighter-bomber.

Not to be left out, two Mi-17 helicopters from the Fire and Rescue Department also performed an aerial display with several of their Multi Skills Team (MUST) personnel doing fast-rapelling from the helicopter.

The sky over tourist-haven Langkawi was then jolted with a display by the Sukhoi Design Bureau's SU-27 Flanker piloted by a test pilot from the Gromov Flight Research Institute.

South Africa's Denel Aviation Rooivalk attack helicopter also took to the sky with a display of its impressive on-air agility and aggressive manoeuvrability.

The attack helicopter, which had participated in LIMA since its inception in 1999, can carry up to 16 "Mokopa" long-range anti-tank missiles and 75mm rockets.

The aerospace segment of LIMA '01 is held at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC) while Tanjung Malai is the venue for the maritime section.

Meanwhile, in KUALA TERENGGANU, Bukit Aman Director of Internal Security and Public Order Datuk Abdul Hamid Mustapha said police had stepped up security in the waters, on land and at ports, airports and entry points in Langkawi to ensure the safety of tourists and the smooth running of LIMA.

The tight security for the duration of the exhibition would not deter tourists from visiting the island, he said.

Speaking to reporters after opening the PDRM badminton championship 2001, he said security in the country had been stepped up even before Lima and the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, following the arrests of the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) leaders and members.

The security measures were enforced in certain locations and states including Terengganu which had been identified as one of the high-risk

states because of its strategic industries like the petroleum and gas industries and the huge power station in Paka, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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