

09/10/2001

Maritime section all set to shine

THE maritime segment of Lima '01 looks set to be the grandest event ever since Lima's inception a decade ago.

Although often considered as the less glamorous segment of the biennial event, the maritime show at Lima '01 has grown to include even those not within the naval circle - those involved in tourism, maritime exploitation and commerce.

Where floor space for the exhibition is concerned, organiser HW Lima Sdn Bhd has recorded a 100 per cent increase with about 10,000 square metres taken up by exhibitors.

Even the pullout of the United States Navy's warship, USS Paul Jones, did not leave any adverse effect on the exhibition despite earlier fears that it would have a repercussion on the participation of other western countries.

A total of 35 ships, mainly from Malaysia, and those from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Italy and Singapore will be participating in the static display which will be held in the waters of Porto Malai.

A highlight of the maritime show at Lima '01 will be the handing over of Royal Malaysian Navy's two CV-90 combat vessels to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Thursday.

The two vessels are part of the 12 ships purchased by the Malaysian Government for the RMN from Dockstavarvet AB of Sweden at a cost of about RM3.8 million each.

The RMN had taken possession of eight vessels so far with the last two to be delivered in December.

HW Lima executive chairman Tan Sri Abdul Wahab Nawi said the success of the maritime segment is an indication that more companies are beginning to realise the importance of the event as a platform to showcase their wares and expertise.

He said the success of the previous maritime shows and the continuous support from the Government have managed to attract more Malaysian companies to participate in the event.

"Where the organiser is concerned, we are trying to provide a platform and means to help Malaysian companies showcase their products, not only to locals but also to the world.

"The participation, especially by Petronas and Malaysian International Shipping Corporation, clearly shows that the event encompasses every single aspect of the maritime industry and not aimed solely at the naval sector," he added.

The absence of "high value" assets like submarines and large warships, which were the main attraction at the previous events, will not affect the popularity of the maritime segment, said Abdul Wahab.

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