

07/09/2002

Pavarotti confirms plans to retire in 2005

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PANGKOR, Fri. - Italian opera legend Luciano Pavarotti, 67, today confirmed plans to retire in 2005, a statement he had made over CNN in May.

"Yes, I will retire on my birthday (Oct 12)," he said, citing plans to "go on a long, long holiday then. And sing only for myself, my friends and family".

However, the songs will not stop just yet because the renowned tenor still has a packed schedule ahead and will, till then, continue to contribute towards humanitarian projects through his renowned charity concerts billed "Pavarotti And Friends".

"I will still be helping people," he said.

However, Pavarotti, a United Nations ambassador of peace since 1998, still has an important message to impart - that the horror of Sept 11 should not be repeated.

He echoed the sentiments of the chairpersons of the Asian Global Leadership Forum 2002 namely Steve Forbes, president and CEO, Forbes and editor-in-chief, Forbes Magazine, Mirzan Mahathir, president Asli and Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, managing director, YTL Corporation Berhad that Sept 11 should not be allowed to happen again.

He said he hoped he deserved the title of Ambassador of Peace, as it was the dream of all men to be able to do something for peace.

He said not all dreams came true, but "we must try".

"The incident is most shocking and has prompted me to stress my message of peace," said the maestro at the official opening of the Spa Village at Pangkor Laut Resort where the two-day forum is being held.

The Spa, the latest addition to the Resort, offers spa treatments that embrace the healing cultures of Asia from Malay, Chinese, Indian to Thai practices. Pavarotti commented on the remarkable progress made by Pangkor Laut Resort, the opening of which he had graced in 1994.

"I am shocked at the beauty of the place!" said the man, who sang its praises in the opera classic "O Paradiso".

Pavarotti will be singing at a special concert tomorrow.