

A bigger and more attractive show

BY IAN MCINTYRE

STAR 29 SEP 2003

LANGKAWI: About 100,000 people are expected to visit the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition (Lima) 2003 to be held here from tomorrow till Oct 5.

From an initial 40 participating aircraft in 1991, the figure has grown to over 100, which will be taking part in both the static and aerial displays this year.

The static displays will be held at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Hall next to the international airport in Padang Matsirat.

The maritime segment, which will be held off Awana Porto Malai Resort, will see a flotilla of 85 vessels, the biggest to date.

The seventh edition of Lima promises to be a fitting farewell gift for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who retires on Oct 31.

Le Proton executive chairman Datuk Mohd Radzi Manan hoped that Lima 2003 would bring sweet memories for



Dr Mahathir, who had inspired the defence trade show in 1991.

"Apart from promoting the defence trade, Lima has showcased Langkawi as a prime tourist destination," he added.

Since 1991, Lima has grown from a modest scale to become one of the top five air and maritime defence shows in the world.

From 150 participants in 1991, it has grown to some 600 exhibitors this year, including heavyweights such as Boeing, Airbus and Russia's Sukhoi bureau.

Radzi said Lima had also moved towards the space industry with the

National Space Agency taking up a booth, where the public could learn among other things about science and space technology.

This year's Lima highlights include the display of the F-111 fighter bomber from the Royal Australian Air Force, the Indian Navy's *INS Delhi*, which is the largest destroyer here, the Royal Malaysian Air Force squadron of F-18 Hornets and MIGs-29, and the United States Air Force's F/A 18-F and F-16 Eagles (C) fighter jets.

The crowd will be thrilled once again by the death defying stunts of the British Royal Air Force Red Arrows aerobatic squadron.

The public can catch a glimpse of the hi-tech weaponry during the last two days of the exhibition. Earlier viewing would be reserved for trade and government delegates.

At the maritime section, visitors can see for the first time, the Royal Malaysian Navy air wing's newly purchased Superlynx helicopters and the largest hydrofoil from Ukraine.