

PM sets a punishing pace at exhibition

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LANGKAWI: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad kept another busy schedule at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima 2003) exhibition yesterday.

Keeping a punishing pace, which left many journalists trailing behind, Dr Mahathir wasted no time upon his arrival at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Hall at about 3.15pm after the Cabinet meeting at the Cabinet Retreat on Gunung Raya.

His first stop was to witness the delivery of the first set of composite wing components to commercial aircraft producer Airbus by Malaysia's Composites Technology Resource Malaysia (CTRM).

This follows an agreement signed between the two parties about a year ago.

Signing on behalf of CTRM was its chairman Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Zahardin Idris while Airbus was represented by its executive vice-president Tom Williams.

While Dr Mahathir was heading for the British Defence booth, he was greeted by well wishers, both foreigners and locals, and many also took the opportunity to take photographs with him.

At the British Defence booth, the Red Arrows who have performed to rave reviews at Lima 2003, gave a token of their appreciation to Dr Mahathir.

Lord Bach, Britain's Defence Minister for Procurement, presented the Prime Minister with a flight jumpsuit, similar to the ones worn by the team's pilots, and also the flight helmet worn by Squadron

leader Jepson.

Dr Mahathir then accepted an invitation to take a flight onboard the new LancAir 350 light aircraft.

The four-seater aircraft is manufactured by a subsidiary of CTRM, LancAir, which is based in Bene, Oregon in the United States.

The RM1.8mil LancAir 350 can be used for both recreational and executive travel.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had an equally busy schedule at the Maritime section of Lima 2003.

He received a courtesy call from Italian Deputy Defence Minister Fillippo Berselli, who later said Italy was more interested in transferring its know-how and technology to Malaysia rather than just exporting goods to the country.

"We are not interested so much to export to Malaysia but to have joint ventures with Malaysian industries and transfer to them the know-how and technology," he said, adding that he encouraged more co-operation between Italian and Malaysian industries, especially in the field of defence.

Abdullah also accepted a courtesy call from Lord Bach. He later toured the maritime exhibition and then boarded a luxury yacht for a fleet review of the vessels anchored offshore at Tanjung Malai.

Meanwhile, some of the warships on display at the maritime segment will be open to the public from today until Sunday at the Awana Porto Malai Resort here.

The public can visit from 10am to 5pm except on Sunday, which is from 10am to 3pm.