

30 SEP 2003

LIMA-Aerobatic

LIMA 03 KICKS OFF WITH DAZZLING AEROBATIC DISPLAY

LANGKAWI, Sept 30 (Bernama) -- The seventh edition of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA 03) exhibition kicked off today with a thundering display by several aerobatic teams.

Four Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) F-5Es performed a fly-past minutes after the official opening by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre.

The aircraft, the mainstay of RMAF capability during the insurgency period, entertained the crowd with several manoeuvres.

The sky above the exhibition centre was then filled with 160 members of the Malaysian Army's Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) being air-dropped on to the Padang Matsirat runways by two RMAF C-130 Hercules aircraft.

To make it an even more memorable performance, all the 160 RDF paratroopers were born in Kedah.

RMAF's FA-18D Hornets also took to the skies with six aircraft from the No 18 Squadron, based at Butterworth, doing several difficult formations.

The aircraft, bought from the United States several years ago with night-attack capability, executed several formations such as the "fan burst", "afterburner loop" and "vertical bombers" much to delight of the appreciative audience.

RMAF Chief Jen Datuk Abdullah Ahmad also took part, piloting an Alouette MK 3 helicopter, to display several manoeuvres.

His helicopter, bearing the words "For You Dr Mahathir" and "Keranamu Dr Mahathir", took to the sky to thank the Prime Minister for modernising the RMAF.

Seven RMAF MiG-29Ns, from the No 17 and No 19 Squadrons based at Kuantan, led by Kol Affendi Buang, also took part in the display with several world-class formations.

Among the formations were "knife edge" and "vertical bombers".

The British Red Arrows aerobatic team performed the opening ceremony's grand finale, entertaining the crowd with several close formations with the aircraft flying as close as six feet apart during the display.

Nine Hawks aircraft, led by Squadron Leader Spike Jepsen, took to the skies to execute well-rehearsed formations such as the "Gripen", "Diamond 9", "Apollo Bend" and "Double Diamond Row".

The world-renowned Red Arrows also managed to "draw" a heart with a spear running through it.

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