

04 OCT 2003

LIMA-Rain

RAIN AND WINDS FAIL TO DAMPEN LIMA 2003

By: Retna NS

LANGKAWI, Oct 4 (Bernama) - Heavy rain and strong winds which have been lashing this island resort since early today failed to dampen the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) 2003 show which entered its fifth day, today.

While people came out in droves to witness the LIMA 2003 at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, where the aerospace exhibition is being held, and at the Awana Porto Malai where the maritime exhibition is on, bad weather forced the cancellation of some demonstrations and air displays.

The Penang Meteorological Department when contacted by Bernama said rain and strong winds would continue until midnight while most ferry services from Penang to Langkawi were suspended due to rough seas.

Most ferry services from Penang were diverted to Kuala Perlis.

LIMA 2003 began on Tuesday and the last four days had been designated only for trade visitors.

The storms cut short the aerial displays and prevented people from visiting ships which were docked at the Awana Porto Malai as the smaller boats were unable to ferry visitors due to the choppy seas.

This is the first time that the LIMA, since its inception in 1991, is being held in October.

Normally the exhibition will be held in December, which would have presented perfect weather conditions for such an exhibition.

However, not to let down the thousands of people who had turned-up, the aerial displays got underway at about 3pm today, with the world famous Red Arrows taking to the skies.

This was followed by the Rooivalk helicopter show and followed by a solo flight by the Russian Sukhoi fighter jet.

The highlight of the airshow was the display by the Royal Malaysian Air Force MIG 29s which roared across the skies over Langkawi despite the rain.

Roads leading to the Langkawi International Airport were clogged with traffic, which kept traffic policemen busy all day long.

"I am dissatisfied with the limited airshow. I wanted my children to watch the shows as I believe shows like these can inspire them to take up flying with the Royal Malaysian Air Force," said Mohammad Hussin, who made the trip from Seberang Prai, Penang with his family.

However he said his family enjoyed visiting the pavilions at the exhibition centre.

Jamaliah Yusof, also from Penang, hoped the weather would clear and the airshow could start.

"I came here early to get in. I was here about 9am. I will wait for the airshows even if they start at 4 pm," said the mother of four children who were on tow.

Melissa Ong, from Ipoh, who was at the airshow with her friends said that her "group" waited for two years to watch air displays at LIMA 2003.

"I waited for two years for this show. I paid RM20 to get in and of course I am disappointed but we can't blame anyone, it's nature at work," she said.

Halimah Mustapha from Johor said although the weather wreaked havoc with her plans, she was still happy to view the maritime and aerospace exhibitions.

"No problem...even if the airshows are cancelled at least I had a chance to visit the exhibition. I'm only dissatisfied that I did not get a

chance to see the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad). I wanted to shake his hands and say thank you for what he has done for the country," she said after being informed that Dr Mahathir left Langkawi last night for Putrajaya.

S.Selvarajan of Kedah meanwhile said that LIMA 2003 was not disappointing at all as he had not missed any of the LIMA exhibitions since 1991.

"It's OK. I bring my family here every two years...we have seen it all so I am not disappointed. The exhibition this time around is much better," he added.

Abdul Ghani Zainal of Kerteh, Terengganu felt that the LIMA 2003 was very informative for his children as they got to learn the workings of an aircraft.

"It is good for the young ones to come here and learn something beneficial. Furthermore this show is not only to boost the industries involved but also for the public to gain more knowledge on ships and aircraft," he added.

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