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Business booming again in Langkawi

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ONCE again, the island of Langkawi is a hive of activity and local traders are seeing good business.

Delegates of the exhibition have converged on the island and tourists are also arriving.

"Business is booming," said Langkawi Tourism Association president I.Z. Melvin.

"Sixty per cent of hotel rooms have been taken up by Lima '03 exhibitors.

"More importantly, most of the exhibitors will be staying on after the event," Melvin said, adding that they would be able to enjoy the island's beautiful beaches.

Reservations were made as early as six months.

Melvin, who is also Tanjung Rhu Resort general manager, said although the business volume had not reached the pre-Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome level, Langkawi had always benefited from Lima.

He said the 2003 exhibition had boosted tourism after the SARS out-break and recent global events.

"There are still rooms available for those with last-minute plans to visit Lima, which will end on Oct 5," he said.

Hotels like The Datai, Tanjung Rhu Resort, The Andaman, Sheraton Perdana, Sheraton Langkawi, City Bayview Hotel and Langkawi Village Resort have informed the association of available rooms.

According to Melvin, accommodation might be available in other hotels which had not contacted the association.

"Member hotels will not be imposing a minimum stay requirement for individual bookings. Such requirement will only apply to groups," he said.

The Langkawi Tourism Association represents 65 members comprising hotels, travel agencies, shop owners, clubs, restaurants and bars.

Hoteliers aren't the only ones enjoying good business from this year's aerospace and maritime event - the seventh since Lima's inception in 1991.

Financial institutions, too, are seeing brisk business as foreigners queue for currency exchange.

Restaurants and local cafes are recording brisk business with eateries offering local cuisine staying open until late at night.

With Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad opening the Lima '03 today, more visitors are expected to throng the island.