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PM hopes for bigger, better shows

reports on "LIMA 2003" by Tony Emmanuel; Marina Emmanuel; Sharanjit EXPRESSING satisfaction over the organisation of this year's show, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday said he hoped the next Lima would be even better.

He said although there were fewer companies participating this time, the quality of the participants was high.

This year's exhibition went well and the number of aircraft and ships on display was impressive, he said.

Dr Mahathir, who was responsible for the growth of Lima over the years, also praised the spectacular aerial displays that had awed and thrilled exhibitors and the public alike.

"I am very satisfied and hope the future show will be better and bigger.

"Lima `05 may be bigger than this if there are no unforeseen circumstances like (an outbreak of) Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)."

Asked if he would help promote Lima `05, Dr Mahathir said he was prepared to do so but added in jest that "I can promote it ... tapi kalau nak suruh bagi duit tak ada la (but if you want me to come up with money, I don't have it)."

Asked about his feelings as this would be his last Lima in his capacity as Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir said:

"My feelings ... I am going to have a good rest. You want me to cry?"

Asked by a Russian journalist on the presence of Russian exhibitors and relations between Russia and Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said both countries had good relations and co-operation between them was increasing.

However, he said this did not only apply to co-operation with the Russians but also other countries.

He was speaking to reporters after witnessing the launching and exhibitors signing ceremony for Lima `05.

Present were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak; Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain; Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd executive chairman Datuk Radzi Manan and HW Lima Sdn Bhd executive chairman Tan Sri Abdul Wahab Nawi.

Yesterday marked the last day of the exhibition for trade visitors. The event would be open to the public from today.

A total of 103 aircraft and 46 vessels are on static display at this year's show.

Earlier in the morning, Dr Mahathir took time off to visit the Telaga Harbour Park yacht marina at Pantai Kok.

He expressed satisfaction over the project and said foreign yacht owners were already aware of its existence and had started making enquiries on the facilities there.

The Telaga Harbour Park, which is the fourth marina in Langkawi, can accommodate 100 yachts at any one time.

The project is undertaken by a group of private companies on a 12ha site at a cost of RM40 million.

A petrol station, marina and commercial complex built under the first phase have been completed and are in operation.

Dr Mahathir, who has been in Langkawi since Tuesday to open Lima `03, inspected boats acquired by the Fire and Rescue Department and had breakfast in front of the commercial complex.

He later toured the Telaga Harbour Park project and was briefed by the

project's adviser, national sailor Datuk Azhar Mansor, before boarding the ferry Lady Yasmin to inspect the waters off Pantai Kok.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir visited exhibitors' booths at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre.