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KUALA LUMPUR: The Defence Services Asia (DSA) and National Security Asia (Natsec) 2022 exhibitions will be a hybrid affair.

The event will be held at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre from March 28 to 31 after a hiatus for its 2020 edition due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Senior Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein applauded the organisers for the “careful and safe approach” of making the exhibitions hybrid in nature, which he

calls a historic first.

“We have seen the pandemic bring governments down to their knees regardless of their status, size, wealth, security agencies and military might.

“Even today, new variants of the virus are emerging such as the Omicron variant of concern that has again forced nations into a heightened state of alert just as we thought we could reopen safely.

“We’ve had to re-evaluate and I believe it’s the same for the Home Ministry; our priorities, especially on how we approach defence and security assets, looking at the con-

straints that we face post Covid-19,” he said at the launch of the event with Home Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin yesterday.

Hishammuddin, who is Defence Minister, said these challenges were the reasons DSA should proceed next year, within the new normal, as it would strengthen military and diplomatic relations.

“In my experience, there can be no substitute for face-to-face meetings as there is only so much you can achieve with virtual conferencing. The only way forward is to come to terms with the reality that the virus is here to stay and we

must learn to live with it,” he added.

Hamzah, meanwhile, said that it was not easy to organise an international event during the pandemic.

He said as global instability increased, it gave rise to many complex security threats such as amplified risk factors for radicalisation and violent extremism, cyber attacks and border security issues.

“In today’s global village we simply cannot afford to deal with these challenges within our own silos.

“Modern security challenges demand strategic cooperation at the global level,” he said.

Meanwhile, DSA said in keeping

with the new norms and advancement of technological and connectivity, DSA 2022 and Natsec 2022 would be complemented by a virtual platform as a value-added component to help participants access the contents before, during and after the show.

“Over 1,170 companies from the global defence and security sectors of more than 54 countries are expected to participate.

“Some 40,000 visitors are also expected at the event. To date, 70% of the space bookings at DSA 2022 and Natsec 2022 have been confirmed,” it said in a statement.