

Govt to give scholarships to encourage horse-riding

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By WONG CHUN WAP

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will provide financial assistance and scholarships to encourage the people to take up horsemanship as a sport, Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said.

He said Malaysia needed efficient riders capable of competing at international level.

Dr Mahathir urged the private sector to provide similar incentives for the talented who did not have the means to take up the sport.

He said the sport should be promoted for all in order to bring out new talents.

"The assumption that eques-

trian is a sport for the rich is no longer true and should be discarded," he said when opening the Bukit Kiara Equestrian and Country Resort here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said equestrian was a sport which a person from any level of society could attempt.

He hoped that equestrian would become a major national sport in future, like badminton.

Malaysia, he said, had a good chance of achieving international acclaim in the sport as it did not require the athlete to be tall and of big build.

The Prime Minister, who also launched the Equine

Council of Malaysia, said the council would handle the promotion and co-ordination of the sport.

He hoped the council, headed by pro tern committee chairman **Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim**, would be able to kindle interest in the sport.

Earlier, Berjaya Group Berhad chief executive officer, **Tan Sri Vincent Tan**, said since the resort was set up last year, more than 2,500 members had signed up.

Tan said the resort was the only one in the country which had facilities for equestrian, adding he hoped it could contribute to the development of the sport in the country.