

PM urges greater participation in equestrian sports

By S. Jayakrishnan and Shareem Amry

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there was much scope for equestrian sports in Malaysia and called for greater participation, particularly among the young, in such activities.

He said he was quite sure that if those interested in equestrian sports developed their skills early they would one day be able to compete

in international events.

Dr Mahathir said he was glad to see the sport had made much progress and were popular locally.

"For some years now this sport has been developing in Malaysia and we see a great deal more interest in equestrian sports today.

"I am glad to see that young people are now being encouraged and being given the opportunity to ride horses and to participate in various events."

Dr Mahathir, who is also

the patron of the Malaysian Equine Council, said this in his speech at the National Horse Show 1995 at the STC Equestrian & Sports Centre in Jalan Sungai Besi here.

The National Horse Show is organised by the STC Equestrian & Sports Centre and the Equestrian Association of Malaysia to promote equestrian sports and activities and educate the public on developments in the local equine industry.

This is the second time the event is being held, after

its successful debut last year, and the National Horse Show is now a major event in the Malaysian equestrian calendar.

Among the main features in the horse show are a national-level equestrian competition involving athletes from 20 riding clubs, including top performers who have represented the country in regional and international competitions in dressage and showjumping, a mini-exposition and a carnival with pony and buggy

rides.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Tun Hanif Omar, the chairman of the Malaysian Equine Council, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Tan Sri Musa Hitam, the president of the Malaysian Equestrian Association and Datuk Ronald Khoo, the chairman of the organising committee of the National Horse Show.

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Horse show should be an annual sports event

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Dr Mahathir and his wife earlier arrived for the launching of the National Horse Show in a colourful horse drawn carriage.

The Prime Minister also hoped that races involving two wheelers would be popularised in the country and added that the Bukit Kiara Equestrian Club had imported one or two such machines.

"This should be a very interesting race and can be held at night so that people can come and watch. They can have night picnics and enjoy themselves generally.

"In the meantime, we would, of course, be able to develop some skilful riders for this event."

(The Prime Minister was referring to the light, two-wheeled vehicle known in the horse racing fraternity as a sulky and which is drawn by a single horse in what is called a trotting or pacing race. The sport is popular in the United States, Hong Kong and Australia but practically unknown here).

Dr Mahathir said there was still a lot to be done to further develop the sport in the country.

Dr Mahathir later presented prizes for the Tag Heuer Grand Prix Show-jumping competition and also witnessed a dressage show before touring a mini expo and carnival.

Khoo, in his speech, said there was growing interest in equestrian sports and activities in the country and this was evident in the large numbers of young people enrolling for riding lessons and participating in equestrian competitions.