

05/06/1997

Glider flying to receive boost at Langkawi show

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Glider flying, a relatively unknown sport except to a handful of enthusiasts who indulged in the activity in the mid-1960s, is expected to receive a boost at the Langkawi Oshkosh East Fly-In from Aug 4 to 8.

In the run-up to the event, the organisers, Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd and the Malaysian Experimental Aircraft Association, have brought in an Australian team for a road show to promote gliders.

The Sportavia Soaring Centre Team arrived here last week and were busy assembling their two gliders and a tow plane when the New Straits Times caught up with them at the Royal Malaysian Air Force air base in Sungai Besi.

Its chief flying instructor, Eddie Madden, said apart from promoting the centre, which conducts basic glider training courses, the team was also here to promote glider flying.

"With Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's backing to promote sport flying, we feel that the environment is conducive for us to bring our equipment to introduce Malaysians to glider flying.

"I know that gliders were flown in Ipoh by a small group of people way back in the 1960s but we hope we can contribute to generating the interest and help more Malaysians take up flying," he said.

Madden said they hoped to work with the MEAA and the Youth and Sports Ministry to hold demonstration flights for youths.

"We hope we can cook something up with the Malaysian authorities to generate enough interest before the Langkawi Oshkosh East Fly-In," he said.

The team brought along two twin-seat Czech-made Blanik L-13 gliders and a tow plane from the centre in Tocumwal, about 370km north of Melbourne. Each glider costs A\$24,000 (RM50,000) and has a maximum speed of 240kmh.

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