

24 AUG 1997

Mahathir- Equestrian

PM HAPPY WITH PROGRESS OF EQUESTRIAN SPORT IN THIS COUNTRY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he is happy with the progress of the equestrian sport in Malaysia which has gained it recognition as a world-class riding country.

He said this was proven when Malaysia was selected to host the International Invitation Show Jumping tournament in February next year.

"The growth of equestrian clubs in this country has also gone up, which will give more opportunities for the youngsters to be involved in this sport" he said at the signing of a Rakan Sukan (Partner in Sports) programme between the Equestrian Association of Malaysia (EAM) and IBEX Corporation Amalgamated Sdn Bhd at the Bukit Kiara Equestrian Country Club, here.

In the last seven years, the number of equestrian clubs in Malaysia had triple to 21 clubs from seven.

Dr Mahathir hoped that through the Rakan Sukan programme, teenagers would be more interested in joining such activities instead of loafing.

Under the programme, IBEX Corporation, a bumiputera company involved in electronics, communications and construction, will sponsor RM100,000 a year for five years for EAM activities.

EAM was represented by its president, Tan Sri Musa Hitam, and IBEX Corporation by its chairman, Datuk Yahya Abdul Jalil, at the signing ceremony.

Musa said Malaysia was the first country in Southeast Asia to be selected to host the show jumping tournament.

The two-day tournament, to be held at the Bukit Kiara Equestrian Country Club from Feb 7 next year, is expected to be participated by world-top 20 riders and 35 Asian famous riders.

"We will try to get the top 20 riders but if we failed, we will try to get the world-top 100 riders instead," he said.

On the prime minister's suggestion that more youngsters be involved in the sport, Musa said EAM would encourage its clubs to give special rates for students and youngsters to participate in horse-riding.

He also said that EAM would hold its annual event, the Merdeka Cup Carnival, on Sept 4-7 at the Selangor Turf Club Equestrian Centre. --

BERNAMA

ZMA RHM JK