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Scuba diving `a lure for eco-tourists'

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Malaysian Sports Diving Association hopes to play a role in promoting the country's underwater eco-tourism potential and conservation of its coral reefs.

The association said scuba diving has contributed a great deal to the influx of eco-tourists although still a very new sport here.

The steady growth of scuba diving has seen the need to establish an association to nurture this activity.

"Under the leadership of its president Mukhriz Mahathir and assisted by other professional members from the scuba diving industry, the association is geared to establish itself and to accomplish its many objectives.

"MSDA works hand in hand with several government bodies including the Tourism Board, Fisheries Department and non-governmental organisations."

MSDA also played an instrumental role in the inaugural Dema Asia '96 exhibition which was held to promote the diving industry and also conservation.

"In a recent Crown-of-Thorns (starfish) clean-up operation, the association conducted workshops to stress the importance of good buoyancy where a scuba diver hovered over a reef without crashing into it," it said.

The association is also assisting in the Rakan Muda programme to expose the young to the marine environment.

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