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Sports-Hang gliding

HANG GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIP TO BE MADE AN ANNUAL EVENT

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- The Ministry of Youth and Sports is planning to make hang gliding as an annual event in Malaysia.

For a start, the World Invitation Kinabalu Hang Gliding Challenge '99 will be held in Sabah on Sept 18 and several top international hang gliders are expected to participate in the championship.

"So far we have received confirmation from the United States, Australia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and France...and I hope such championship will become the catalyst for airborne sports in Malaysia," said Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, here today.

Although the sport is quite new in the country, he was confident that it could attract local enthusiasts to participate in the robust airborne sport.

According to Muhyiddin, the proposal to hold the event was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who wanted more activities of world standard to be held here.

Initially, amateur gliders would not be allowed to participate as the sport is considered dangerous...however, they would be encouraged to watch and learn the techniques in handling the contraption to improve their skill.

Besides promoting Malaysia as a destination for hang gliding sport, the championship would also be the first step in Malaysia's efforts to host the world championship in 2003.

"We will promote the sport among Malaysians from now and, if possible, a club should be formed and registered with the world body," Muhyiddin said.

The championship, which will be officiated by Dr Mahathir, will be held at the Kelab Golf Gunung Kinabalu.

It is being jointly sponsored by the ministry, Aerospace Industries Malaysia Sdn Bhd, the Sabah State Government and Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board.

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