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World's top gliders to compete at Mt Kinabalu

KOTA KINABALU, Wed. - A hang-gliding competition featuring top gliders from around the world will mark the opening of the 15th World Mountain Running Trophy at Kinabalu Park, about 80 kilometres from here, on Saturday.

Ten top hang-gliding pilots, including two women, will come down the South Peak (3,657 metre) at 7am, follow the summit trail, go to Kundasang and land at the Mt Kinabalu Golf Club.

The competition is jointly organised by the Federal Youth and Sports Ministry, Aerospace Industries Sdn Bhd, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board and the Sabah State Government.

The pilots are from the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Italy, Brazil, Venezuela and Germany. Today, the pilots were airlifted by helicopter up the mountain for a dry run.

Among them were world top pilot Manfred Ruhmer of Austria and world record holder for women cross-country hang-gliding Tove Heiney of Australia.

Speaking to the Press here recently, the event's deputy organising chairman Lt Kol Basir Abdul Rahman said the competition was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Malaysia is interested in holding the world hang-gliding championship here in 2003.

Officials from the world hang-gliding governing body, the FAI World Hang-gliding Series, are already here to assess the suitability of holding the championship at Mt Kinabalu.

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