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Hold more international meets, says PM

MALAYSIA should organise equestrian events at international level to attract more interest in the sport and sponsorship from the private sector.

"But we must be good in getting sponsors because many other sports are competing for sponsors," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after presenting prizes to winners of the Showjumping Class 37 (E Grade Power and Speed) of the Premier Cup Challenge, first of the two-part Premier Cup Series 2000 at Bukit Kiara Equestrian and Country Resort, Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia already had several riders who had competed at world level and many young talented riders.

He said equestrian events would be included in the Asian Games 2006 if Malaysia win the bid to host the Games.

National equestrian team member Quzandria Nur Ambak emerged champion and Kpl Ruzailina Zainal Abidin, another member of the national team, was second, while Handry Mawengkang was placed third.

\* JASON Cheon of Templer Park Equestrian Club won the Grand Slam Grand Prix title and RM9,000 after beating six riders in the jump-off with a time of 59.54 secs in the Premier Cup 2000 Challenge at Bukit Kiara Equestrian and Country Resort yesterday.

Qabil Ambak of 3Q Equestrian Club and Chris Ladbroke of Selangor Polo Riding Club, though finishing faster than Cheon with times of 50.58 and 52.05 respectively, lost because they picked up a penalty in the jump-off.

If Cheon goes on to win the Premier Cup Final on Nov 1-5, he will pocket an additional bonus of RM20,000 on top of the champion's prize money.

But it will not be easy as the Final is expected to attract the best riders and horses in South-East Asia who will be eligible to collect FEI-BCM world ranking points.

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