

26/08/2001

PM has easy task in harness race

PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad should have an easy passage when he competes in his first horse-riding event ever, the harness driving competition, at the Selangor Turf Club (STC) in Seri Kembangan today.

His teammate, STC master ferrier Dennis Kennedy, has paved the way by coming out tops in the first part of competition on Thursday and he continued the pace in the second part yesterday for the least total penalties of 119.41.

Sea Games three-day eventing rider S. Lingesparan is second with 126.26s, giving the Premier a lot of room to negotiate when he takes the reins for the last part, the marathon, at 7.0am.

The event is part of the five-day STC Equestrian championships and harness driving has been introduced to get more people to appreciate equestrian sports.

Qabil Ambak Mahamad Fathil continued to live up to his reputation as the country's best showjumper when he won the 100cm AM5 Mini Prix event, beating Thai Games rider Varat Ngowabunpat and the Philippines' Danielle Cojuangco to second and third respectively.

Qabil completed the jump-off in 38.13s, well ahead of Ngowabunpat's 42.09s and Cojuangco's 44.8s. The next best national rider was Azni Azar, who came fifth behind another Philippines Games' rider Janine Santos.

However, the true test for the Games rider will be today when they compete in the World Cup regional qualifier, which will use fences of the same height as for the Games.

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