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Sports-Powerboat (Nicolo)

MALAYSIA HELPS TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF POWERBOAT RACING

By: Asan Ahmad

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, March 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has helped to raise the level of Formula 1 Powerboat World Championship series, the head of the event's international promoter, Nicolo di San Germano said.

He said the excellent organisation of the Malaysian Grand Prix had help to raise the level of the sports internationally and the result was evident with the growth of the sport in Southeast Asia.

Singapore is the latest to join the family and will host a second event in the Southeast Asian region after Malaysia.

Following Malaysia's success in staging the event in a grand manner, more countries had been lobbying to host the championship including Brunei and Indonesia.

"This shows that the event is getting more popular and is expanding," said Nicolo after the "Award of Excellence for 2002 Season" ceremony at a dinner at the Mines de Sel de Bex here last night. Malaysia received the Best Organiser Award for the Formula 1 Powerboat World Championship 2002 series.

"I am very grateful for the support from the Malaysian Government and I feel committed to developing the sports together with H2O Sports Sdn Bhd especially the "Formula Future" series, said Nicolo.

He said, the "Formula Future" drawn-up by Malaysia, specially designed for youngsters throughout the country was indeed a great move and therefore Malaysia was serious not only in popularising the sports but also in developing future powerboat drivers.

"I know it is the wish of Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to ensure that the high tech sports becomes accessible to the young Malaysian engineers," said Nicolo.

"We in the UIM family are ready to play a part to help develop the programme," he added.

For the 2003 season, UIM had two new hosts for the event, Sentosa Singapore and Sunset Beach Saudi Arabia.

Since Malaysia staged the event in 2001 which was done in a grand manner, it had helped to increase the number of hosts as well as the popularity of the sports.

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