

By OH ING YEEN
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PUTRAJAYA will be hosting what is touted to be the largest Dragon Boat event in Malaysia, with more than 1,500 participants from various countries.

The three-day sporting event will be held from June 5 to 7 at the Putrajaya Water Sports Complex. So far, 1,500 participants from 30 local teams and 20 foreign teams – from China, Singapore, Indonesia, Britain, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand and the Philippines – have registered.

At a press conference to announce the event on Thursday, Mega Events Sdn Bhd adviser Tan Sri Soong Siew Hoong said he hoped that the festival would put Malaysia on the map as a dragon boat racing destination.

"We want to set a platform of international standard for foreign investors to see Putrajaya not only as Malaysia's administrative capital but also as a centre with a capacity large enough to host such a significant international event.

"This is also a great way to promote the beautifully landscaped city of Putrajaya as an ideal tourist centre to an international audience at the same time.

"We want international visitors and the public at large to come and see the thrilling race and feel the exhilarating energy and passion of the participants in order to get a better understanding of the event," he said.

"This sport promotes teambuilding, and fosters camaraderie and strength.

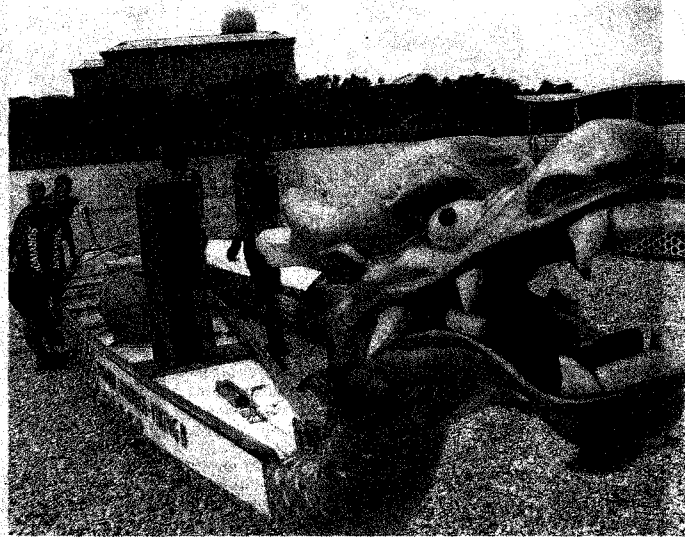
"Later, Mega Events will be signing a MoU with Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to provide on-site training for its event management students as part of the CSR programme," he added.

The festival is also set to be an exciting family event with more than 50 booths selling food, souvenirs and fashion as well as other items.

Other activities include a Coffee Tarik competition, horse rides for children and a colouring contest.

Putrajaya to host dragon boat festival

The Pink Challengers will be among the teams taking part in the inaugural international event



We are survivors: The Pink Challengers preparing their dragon boat in conjunction with the 1st Putrajaya International Dragon Boat Festival 2009.

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TAN SRI SOONG SIEW HOONG

BCWA president Ranjit Kaur hoped that their participation would show that there was life after breast cancer.

"From a medical aspect, breast cancer survivors have a tendency to have swelling on the arms due to the removal of lymph nodes, and paddling provides upper body exercise and improves blood circulation.

"At the end of the race, we usually have a moment of silence in memory of those who fought breast cancer and died, as well for those who are still battling it," she said.

Putrajaya Corporation sports and recreation principal assistant director Ahmad Azuddin Arshad said with the international-level facilities at the complex, they hoped to be the best host.

"Hopefully, this will spur more activities at the lake. We want to be the best water sports destination," he said, adding that the Penang dragon boat coach had come to coach participants and training began two weeks ago.

The event is organised by Mega Events, in collaboration with Perbadanan Putrajaya (PPJ), the Tourism Ministry, the Information, Communication and Culture Ministry and the Penang Dragon Boat Association, and in affiliation with the International Dragon Boat Federation.

For more information, visit www.putrajaya-dragonboat.com, call 03-6141 6553 or email enquiries to info@putrajayadragonboat.com.

Proceeds from the event booths will be donated to the Breast Cancer Welfare Association (BCWA), Cervical Cancer Awareness Association (CARES), the Spastic Children's Association of Selangor and Federal Territories (SCASFT) and selected orphanages.

The Pink Challengers, the team from BCWA that is known for their high spirits and strong motivation, will be among the teams to look out for at the event.