

Sailboat racers looking forward to 'monsoon' in Johor

ISKANDAR PUTERI: Johor is going to be hit by a tenacious "monsoon" beginning today.

It's all systems go for the Monsoon Cup 2015/2016 which will take place at Puteri Harbour Marina over the next five days.

Twelve teams are participating from nine countries – Australia, Britain, Denmark, the United States, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Singapore, and host Malaysia.

Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar officially launched the event yesterday. The Johor Ruler was accompanied by Crown Prince Tunku Ismail at the launch. Also present were Mentri Besar Datuk Mohamed Khaled Nordin and other officials.

Sultan Ibrahim and Tunku Ismail were seen chatting with the participating teams.

The sole Malaysian team represented at the championship is gunning to break the dry spell by being the first national team to score at least one point.

Hazone Racing Team skipper Hazwan Hazim Dermawan said that although the Malaysian team is currently in last position trailing the Singapore team, they had prepared to do their best.

"We are expecting a tough challenge ahead as we are provided with Gennaker-type boats instead of the Spinker ones that we usually use," he said, adding that it will be the first time that the team will be sailing in the Puteri Harbour Marina.

Five-time world champion Ian Williams is looking forward to an interesting race ahead as strong currents and winds pose an extra challenge.

Williams, who is the British skipper for the GAC Pinder team, said they were determined to continue with their strong momentum.

"We have been here for the past three days, practising with the new boat at a new location. The current and winds are a bit stronger here," he added.

GAC Pinder is leading with 90 points ahead of the Nautiska Racing team led by Bjorn Hansen (88 points) followed by the US One team headed by Taylor Canfield with 85 points.

Johor police chief Comm Datuk Wan Ahmad Najmuddin Mohd assured that police will be all eyes to ensure tight security throughout the event which ends on Saturday.

During the launch, a moment of silence was observed in honour of the late Tunku Laksamana Johor Tunku Abdul Jalil before Sultan Ibrahim unveiled the Tunku Laksamana Johor Cup, which will be awarded to the winner of the Monsoon Cup.

Tunku Jalil, who passed away recently, was instrumental in the development of the sport and the Liga Layar Malaysia and Belia Belayar sailing programmes.



Meet and greet: Sultan Ibrahim being introduced to the sailors by World Match Racing Tour director James Pleasance. Looking on is Tunku Ismail. — Bernama

Watch the video
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