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## Horse power at its best

2011/03/14

By Chuah Bee Kim

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IT was a rare treat to see how horse and rider worked together to clear obstacles in their path at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) International Johor Horse Show 2011.

Held at its campus in Skudai, the event featured 22 events over four days from March 10.

Altogether 70 riders and 100 horses from 17 equestrian clubs throughout the country took part in the event organised for the third time by UTM.

Besides the equestrian events which range from show jumping to dressage and endurance 20km, 40km and 80km rides, there was also an equine exposition, co-organised by the Farrier Association of Malaysia and Malaysian Equine Council.

The exposition featured a farrier demonstration and competition.

Farrier Association of Malaysia chairman Raja Azid Raja Ismail said eight farriers took part in the competition in which their skills in making horse shoes were tested.

"A good horse shoe will give the horse comfort and not injure it.

"Making such a shoe takes commitment and dedication to the craft," said Raja Azid.

The participants in the farrier competition include those from various state palaces, city councils, veterinary departments as well as those from the horse racing industry.

Mohd Ali Abdul Rahman, 65, a member of the Farrier Association, said the equine items on display ranging from saddles, riding wear to horse shoes were also up for sale to raise funds for the association.

"We have more than 100 members throughout Malaysia. Proceeds from the sale will go towards a fund set up to help members who have had mishaps," said Ali.

Among the events was the Show Jumping event which had competitors vying for the Sultan Ibrahim Cup.

Nabil Ismail, 24, from the Cempaka International College Equestrian in Kuala Lumpur emerged the winner in the category held on the third day of the event.

Nabil, who rode Urgola, his favourite horse whom he described as good-tempered, beat Praveen Nair from the National Sports Council.

Both riders collected four penalties when clearing the hurdles, but Nabil clocked 46.81 seconds against Praveen's 50.16 seconds.

Nabil, an equestrian trainer, has been in the equestrian circuit for the past 12 years.

"I was quite nervous at the start of the competition because Urgola's leg was slightly swollen.

"Luckily, everything turned out well for the two of us," he said.

Nabil would train with his horse for half to one and a half hours each day in preparation for the event.

He received the Sultan Ibrahim Cup from Tunku Abdul Rahman, who represented his father, Sultan Ibrahim.

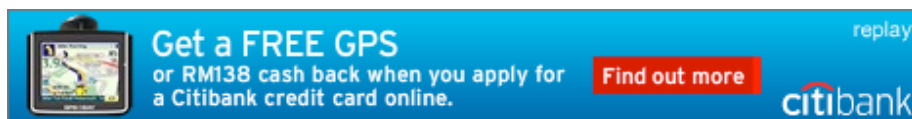
UTM vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Zaini Ujang, who launched the event, said UTM was the first university to have started an equestrian centre in the campus in 1995.

It was set up to promote the sport and offered as a co-curriculum activity for undergraduates.

Show jumping was said to have originated in 1866 when a class for show jumpers was held at a Harness Show in Paris, France.

Fifteen years later, the sport made its debut in England as the lepping competition.

By the 1900s, show jumping took place at the more important shows, with separate classes for women riding side-saddle.

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