

PM: Le Tour de Langkawi event will be famous

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that the Le Tour de Langkawi '96 would turn into a world famous cycling event just like the Le Tour de France.

"Although the new event was named after the legendary and idyllic Langkawi island, it is more of a Malaysian event because the racers will be cycling throughout the States in Peninsular Malaysia.

"We may be a little ambitious but we are confident

that Le Tour de Langkawi will become as famous as Le Tour de France."

He was glad that the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) had given its full support for the event.

He said this when launching the Le Tour de Langkawi at the Berjaya Langkawi Resort. Also present were Sports and Youth Minister Tan Sri Muhiyuddin Yassin, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, UCI president Hein Verbruggen, Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) president Dr

Khaled Al-Turki and organising chairman Wan Lokman Wan Ibrahim.

The event is promoted by First Cartel Sdn Bhd and sanctioned by the UCI, ACC and the Malaysian National Cycling Federation (MNCF).

The 1,300km route would pass through all the States in the peninsula over 10 days. Le Tour de Langkawi '96, which carries RM1 million in prize money, will be flagged off with a round-island tour of Langkawi on March 1.

The cyclists will then proceed to Kangar, Butterworth, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Mersing, Endau, Pekan, Kuantan, Kuala Terengganu and Kota Baru before returning to Langkawi on March 10 for the individual time trial event which will be held on Gunung Raya.

In supporting the call by Dr Mahathir, Wan Lokman, who is also First Cartel chairman, said the organiser was committed to making Le Tour de Langkawi a world-class cycling event.