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Mahathir - cycling

DR MAHATHIR HOPES FOR MORE SPONSORS FOR FUTURE TOUR DE LANGKAWI

LANGKAWI, Feb 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed the hope that the Tour de Langkawi (TDL) 96 cycling tournament will draw more sponsors in the future.

He said the event, geared to be on par with the "Tour de France" actually needed large amounts of funds to be organised.

"This event is different since spectators do not have to pay, therefore the sponsors are vital since the it is not cheap to organise the tournament," he told reporters after the flagging-off the 11-day race which drew 138 cyclists from various parts of the world.

He said almost RM8 million was needed to organise TDL'96.

"I hope it will become an annual affair but more sponsors are needed for the tournament," he said.

Dr Mahathir said sponsors would obtain publicity from the event and this would also help in promoting Malaysia.

Asked if he was satisfied with the response by sponsors for the inaugaural event, the Prime Minister quipped, " I am almost happy but it seems that the organisers are not due to lack of funds,".

Dr Mahathir said TDL' 96 was held not to reap profit but instead it was aimed at promoting Malaysia.

"Eventhough at first we planned it as a race around Langkawi but with involvement of international bodies, the tournament has become a grand event," he said.

"The tournament has become international-class and there are only two other such events in the world -- the more than 100-year old Tour de France and another championship in the United States," he said.

Dr Mahathir was confident that the TDL' 96 would attract attention like the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima) exhibition. --
Bernama

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