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Bicycle-tour

FORMER WORLD CHAMP TO TAKE PART IN LE TOUR de LANGKAWI

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- Alex Pedersen of Denmark who won the World Champion cycling race in 1994 is among big names who will be participating in Malaysia's first international standard cycling race, Le Tour de Langkawi scheduled to start on Feb 29.

Pedersen is among the seven cyclists registered by Denmark who will be leading their charge in the race which offered a total cash prize of RM1 million.

Apart from Pedersen, the Danish team comprises Christian Andersen, Henrik Jacobson (winner of the Scaandinavian race 1995), Stig Guldback, Michael Rosberg (Danish Cup champion 1995), Dennis Rosmussen and Morten Sonne.

While Denmark have their former World Champion in their line-up, Australia who also confirmed their participation, have all their Olympic Games cyclist in the team.

Two of the Australian cyclists are World Junior champion Josh Collingwood and Deane Rogers who won the title in 1994 and 1995 respectively.

The other members of the team are 1994 Commonwealth Games champion Damian McDonald, Marcel Gono and Brett Dennis.

Other countries fielding their top cyclists in the tour include Holland, who will be fielding their Olympic Games team, Ireland, Republic of Slovakia and Britain.

Host, Malaysia will be fielding three teams in the race -- the elite squad, the back-up and the Commonwealth Games project squad.

The elite squad will comprise Chiang Mai SEA Games gold medalist Tsen Seong Hoong, M. Kumaresan, Edwin Ng, Affendy Rosli, Azizan Manap, Musairi Musa and Wong Ah Thiam.

Malaysia's coach Ng Joo Ngan when asked of their chances in the race said that they aim to finish among the top 10 team from the whole tour.

"The most important thing for us is to learn from world top cyclists and the race will also tell us where we stand compared to the other cyclists in the world," said Ng.

To date, 66 riders from 11 countries have confirmed their participation and the latest to response were Japan and Ukraine whose entries were received by the organisers early today.

The race to be flagged off by Le Tour patron Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Feb 29 in Langkawi will be in stages -- from Kangar to Penang, then to Ipoh, Genting Highlands, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Johor Bharu, Mersing, Kuantan, Kuala Terengganu, Kota Bharu and return for the finish in Langkawi on March 10. -- Bernama