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Mahathir-tour

PM HOPES MORE WILL WATCH THE LANGKAWI TOUR NEXT YEAR

LANGKAWI, March 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad hopes that the success of the maiden Tour de Langkawi bicycle race will attract more public interest for the event.

However, he was happy with the response from the public for the race traversing peninsular Malaysia which he described as satisfactory.

"Not many people watched the race this time possibly because they were not aware that a bicycle race of international standard was going on.

"So I hope more people will give their support next year and watch the event," he told reporters after witnessing the tour of Langkawi race which was the climax of the 10-day event.

He also praised the organisers of the race, First Cartel for their success in running the event well although it was their first experience.

Asked on the performance of the national team in the race, Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with what they had achieved.

"At his stage, I am happy with the Malaysian team although they have yet to learn in terms of strategy.

"We are not that good but they are bound to learn especially the strategy to be used in the race," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the race also proved that the weather was no longer the main factor in determining the performance of any particular team.

"We find from this race that it is immaterial whether the participating team comes from a cold or warm country. So long as the racers are dedicated, the weather will not be a problem," he said.

"For instance, if the participant comes from a desert country with a much hotter climate than Malaysia's, there is no guarantee that he is capable of competing against the participant who comes from a country with a cold climate," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he had never thought that the event would become such a big affair and attracted over 150 foreign professional cyclists.

"In the beginning, all I wanted to have was just a race around this island but the organisers came up with some fantastic ideas that it could be held on an international standard around the peninsula in 10 days," he said.

He added: "I don't think the cyclists would survive as I myself who followed the race today in an air-conditioned car was so thirsty and was begging for water,".

Later, Dr Mahatir was presented with a RM15,000 mountain bike by First Cartel chairman Wan Lokman Wan Ibrahim. -- BERNAMA

ZAA AO