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Tour de Langkawi organisers need RM10 million

Zakri Baharudin

IN aspiring to become the leading bicycle race in this region, organisers of the third edition of February's Le Tour de Langkawi First Cartel are faced with numerous obstacles before they can be assured of success.

Top of the list is the task of raising RM13 million, the cost to organise the 12-stage race.

In light of the current economic situation, this will prove to be a daunting affair.

Tour organising chairman Wan Lokman Wan Ibrahim said they have only secured RM2 million in sponsorship money with less than a month before the dateline.

The sponsors will be presented to the Tour patron Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Dec 19 in Kuala Lumpur.

Other than this, Wan Lokman also said the organisers must prove the Tour will run smoothly due to the recent changes in the International Cycling Union's (UCI) regulations.

After 1998, all races classified as 2.5 under the UCI standard, are barred from having trade teams competing.

Le Tour, which has remained at the 2.5 level after three years, will need to upgrade to the 2.4 level if it plans to attract first division trade teams in 1999.

And the only way to do this is to ensure that all aspects of the organisation, results, technical know-how and race routes are up to standard.

UCI officials will review the race, which begins Feb 18-Mar 1 next year, to decide on whether the Tour deserves a promotion.

At present, the Tour is allowed to have 50 per cent of the field made up of trade teams with less than 30 per cent from the first division teams.

Besides this, the Tour organisers are also urging countries down for the Commonwealth Games next year to include their national riders in the Tour.

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