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PM FLAGS OFF '98 MALAYSIA MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX

JOHOR BA HARU, April 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today started off the 1998 Malaysia Motorcycle Grand Prix (GP) at the Johor Circuit in Pasir Gudang, 44km from here.

He also flagged off the 125cc event at the 3.86km circuit.

Among big names participating in the event are Japanese riders Noboru Ueda and Youichi Ui and Italians Roberto Locatelli and Mirko Giansanti.

However, the big draw of the GP is the 500cc race which will see four time world champion Michael Doohan of Australia, first round winner at Suzuka Max Biaggi of Italy, Carlos Checa of Spain and Japanese rider Kyoji Nanba exhibiting their best skills to clinch the title.

Doohan, Biaggi and Checa will be on Hondas while Nanba will be astride a Yamaha.

This is the first time the GP is being held outside Shah Alam since 1991.

Malaysia is the second Asian country after Japan chosen to host the race.

-- BERNAMA

MKO DSR