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Discipline key word, says Dr M

NOW that the Sepang International Circuit has set a new benchmark for Formula One circuits, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Malaysians to be more disciplined if they are to achieve the next step in motor racing.

"Our strive for motorsports excellence doesn't end here because we have all sorts of events other than Formula One," said Dr Mahathir after witnessing the inaugural Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix in Sepang yesterday.

"The circuit is not merely for the F1 as the motorsports complex also hosts motorcycle races and consists a go-kart track and a four-wheel drive route.

"We already know we are going to host the F1 every year after this and we must remember that a lot of F1 drivers started their careers in go-karts.

"Our youngsters should learn how to drive starting with go-karts and they should start to focus their efforts on proper rules and regulations and not take part in illegal night races."

Dr Mahathir, the prime mover behind Malaysia's F1 debut, said youngsters should take discipline very seriously in order to succeed in the sport.

"We have to discipline ourselves like Michael Schumacher or Mika Hakkinen.

"We notice that before a race these drivers refrain from drinking, sleep early, look after their health and do not over eat.

"It's the same with bicycle racing as we have observed how disciplined European riders are about maintaining their performance.

"We have to learn from them because people who are indisciplined will never succeed.

"Like Azhar (Datuk Azhar Mansor), I'm sure he couldn't have sailed around the world without discipline.

"The Government can build facilities but if the people are indisciplined then we will never be able to improve internationally."

Meanwhile, the International Automobile Federation (FIA) have lauded Malaysia for the superb organisation of the Malaysian Grand Prix.

Sepang International Circuit (SIC) managing director Hussin Mohamed Ali said FIA race director Charlie Whiting felt that Malaysia had emerged as among the best organisers of a Formula One World Championship.

"Whiting praised us for our organisational ability as Argentina and Brazil, for instance, took five years to become organisers like Malaysia," he said.

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