

20 JUL 1999

Mahathir-Cycling

DR M FLAGS OFF KEDAH OPEN CYCLING RACE

JITRA, July 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad flagged off riders taking part in the Kedah Open Cycling championship here this morning.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, spent about an hour watching the event.

He later presented prizes to Kelantan rider Mohamed Sayuti Mohamed Zaid, who won in the hill-climbing event for students Under-15, and runners-up Mohamed Zamri Salleh from Terengganu and Che Hafizan Che Roza who came in third.

Asked to comment on the championship by the emcee, Dr Mahathir said cycling was quite popular in Malaysia particularly if it was held at night as it could attract more than 50,000 spectators.

He said he hoped to see more youths participating in cycling events in efforts to tap young talents to be groomed to represent the country in international meets.

He said with proper training and guidance, it would not be impossible for Malaysian cyclists to compete in the Tour de France, one of the prestigious cycling tournaments in the world.

The Prime Minister later proceeded to the Lubuk Batu Muslim cemetery at Kampung Kubang Pasu to visit the grave of Ali Yusof, a close friend of Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir recited Al-Fatihah prayers, sprinkled scented water and bunga rampai on the grave.

Dr Siti Hasmah, Ali's wife and children were also present.

Ali, an Umno activist from Kubang Pasu division, died of liver cancer in August last year. He was 63.

Dr Mahathir was overseas when Ali died. He sent a condolence message on receiving news of Ali's death.

Ali had served as the division's secretary and treasurer apart from being a community leader.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir visited the Kampung Kubang Pasu Umno branch ballot box unit at the community hall here.

The unit's head Ali Abdullah briefed the Prime Minister on the preparations made for the upcoming general election.

-- BERNAMA

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