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Mahathir-F1

MAHATHIR THANKS F1 CONSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION FOR HAVING F1 IN MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad thanked Formula 1 (F1) Constructors Association president Bernie Ecclestone tonight for making the F1 race in Malaysia a reality.

He said Malaysia never expected the F1 to be held in the country but Ecclestone, the main force behind F1, had made this possible.

"Malaysia is glad to host this race...premier race," he said at the F1 Gala Dinner held here in conjunction with the first Petronas Malaysian F1 Grand Prix.

Present were Ecclestone, cabinet ministers, Petronas chairman Tan Sri Azizan Zainol Abidin, Malaysia Airports Berhad chairman Tan Sri Basir Ismail as well as the drivers and team managers.

Among the drivers are world champion Mika Hakkinen, two-times champion Michael Schumacher and Eddie Irvine.

The Malaysian Grand Prix will start tomorrow with the timed practice at the Sepang F1 Circuit which is owned by Malaysia Airports.

Dr Mahathir hoped that the teams would enjoy their stay in Malaysia.

"Enjoy your stay and watch the race and take some time to wander around Malaysia...this is a beautiful country," he said.

He said that after this race, the final leg of the F1 would take place in Japan in two weeks and it was possible for the drivers, managers and other foreign visitors to extend their stay here.

"The longer you are here, the better it is for us," he said.

Shirley Bassey, the voice behind the songs in three James Bond movies entertained the guests.

-- BERNAMA

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