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Mahathir-Hakkinen

MIKA HAKKINEN CALLS ON DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 9 (Bernama) -- World Formula One champion Mika Hakkinen today called on the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his office here.

Hakkinen, the Finn who grabbed the world F-1 title with 100 points last year, is here to attend the opening of the Sepang International Circuit (SIC) by Dr Mahathir tonight.

The 30-year-old McLaren ace driver said he took the opportunity to convey to the prime minister what F-1 drivers thought about the 5.542-km Sepang circuit.

"I got the opportunity to explain to him what the racing drivers' impression about the new track in Malaysia for the Formula One," he told reporters after the 30-minute meeting with Dr Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Department here.

Hakkinen, who made his Formula One debut in 1991 and had 113 grand prix starts to his credit, said the RM286-million circuit was a very good and exciting one.

"It's a difficult circuit to drive...very fast, some demanding corners which need very good skill and very good car. I like it, it's very good work," said Hakkinen.

He said Malaysians should be proud of the circuit which would host one of the Formula One legs on Oct 17, the first to be held in Malaysia.

Hakkinen said spectators coming for the race would certainly enjoy it.

"It will extremely be good run and good show. People should see and understand what is Formula One," said Hakkinen, who aborted the race in the season's opener in Melbourne on Sunday due to engine failure.

-- BERNAMA

AR RYN