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PM confident golf tourney will benefit nation

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday expressed confidence that the World Cup Golf '99, to be held in Kuala Lumpur from November 18 to November 21, will generate benefits for the country. Speaking to reporters after touring the venue for the world-class event in Sri Kembangan, some 20km from the capital, Dr Mahathir said the tourism industry is one sector that would prosper from the event.

"The tournament will introduce Malaysia as a country with excellent courses for international golf competitions. Viewers can see Malaysia when watching the World Cup Golf '99," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he believes the World Cup will also draw a lot of visitors into the country, thus giving good business to local hotels, just like what had happened during the Formula One Grand Prix.

To be staged at the Mines Resort, the tournament is expected to attract some 16,000 fans to the golf course to root for their favourites in the star-studded championship title.

Among those who have confirmed participation in the championship are Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara, the two big names in the US tour circuit. Earlier, the Prime Minister who is also the patron of the World Cup Golf '99, was briefed by organising chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Ismail on the preparations made for the event.

Aziz said advertisements and promotional campaigns had been made and the World Cup should be attracting a good crowd from all over the world. Golf sensation Woods was also part of the promotional campaign. He did an advertisement on the tournament which ended with him saying: "Malaysia Boleh".

Dr Mahathir said he may not fancy golf as a sport but he had always been attracted to golf courses with its greenery and well-treated grass, trees and natural beauty.

He added that there were a lot of criticisms about golf course developments in Malaysia.

However, after the courses have matured into a beautiful green sites, people change their minds and golf club memberships have become an investment tool.

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