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PM: We hope to produce own racing car

Ramlan Said

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Malaysia hopes to produce its own racing car when it has acquired the automotive engineering capability, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said greater interest by the public in motor sports could help accelerate the process of acquiring the capability.

This was because the automotive industry was not only confined to producing motor vehicles but also the development of motor sports.

"I hope it will catch on and help enhance our capability in automotive engineering so that we can produce our own racing cars which are comparable (in quality) with those produced by other countries," he said when opening the two-week KL Motorsports Show '99 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had achieved considerable success in the automotive industry, moving from a country which imported cars to one assembling and manufacturing them.

"Since the production of the first Proton cars in 1985, we have now acquired the capability to produce and test cars. We are also designing cars suited to our climatic conditions."

Dr Mahathir said the Government would like to see youths participating in organised motorsports activities instead of being involved in unhealthy activities like illegal racing.

"I hope our youths will channel their energy and interest towards activities which are safer and more organised," he said, adding that the Government had always placed importance on the development of motor sports.

With the skill and experience gained in sanctioned races, he said, they could then aim to participate in the F3000 category and eventually become F1 drivers.

Dr Mahathir called on organisers of motor sports events to get the participation of the various age groups in their programmes.

On the Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix on Sunday, the Prime Minister said it was no easy feat as several other countries in Asia were interested in hosting the F1 race.

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