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Mahathir-Golf

WORLD CUP GOLF WILL PROJECT THE COUNTRY WORLDWIDE, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the World Cup of Golf 99 will be another opportunity for Malaysia to showcase its capability to host a world class sporting event.

The prime minister said it would also help the country's economy as tourists and golf enthusiasts converge here for the event from Nov 18 to 21. The prestigious tournament will be held at The Mines Resort and Golf Club in Seri Kembangan.

"I was informed that an estimated 600 million television audience will follow the event and this will surely project Malaysia as a nation which has a golf course capable of hosting the World Cup," he told a news conference after inspecting the course, here.

Dr Mahathir said just like the Formula One race at the Sepang F1 Circuit last month, the golf tournament would result in local hotels doing good business.

"It will be good for the economy of the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would like to produce good professional golf players who were capable of becoming champions in the future.

He said the tournament would be interesting with the participation of world number one American Tiger Woods.

"Especially with Tiger Woods being one of the players. Everybody has heard about Tiger Woods, but this is the first time to (actually) see him.

"As he said just now "Malaysia Boleh", so I really hope Tiger Woods will also boleh," he said referring to the promotional video clip shown earlier featuring the golf star who uttered the famous slogan "Malaysia Boleh" (Malaysia Can).

The prime minister, who is the patron of the prestigious tournament, spent about an hour inspecting the golf course where preparations have shifted into high gear.

Thirty-two nations will be participating in the tournament which would attract tens of thousands of spectators and an estimated television audience of some 600 million.

The golf club, which forms part of the development called the Mines Resort City undertaken by the Country Heights Group, is about 20 minutes' drive from here.

It has been reported that the property-based firm is shelling US\$1.1 million (RM4.18 million) to entice Woods to participate in the championship.

The staging of the event comes on the heels of Malaysia's successful hosting of the penultimate session of the F1 last month.

-- BERNAMA

HRS/MAM RM