

# PM wants athletes to reach out for glory

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**By S. Navalan**

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has repeated his support for Malaysian sportsmen and women who strive to achieve success in the international arena.

"We are solidly making a name for ourselves as wonderful and first class hosts of international meets.

"But it is also important for our sportsmen to show they can achieve results at international tournaments," said Dr Mahathir in his speech during the appreciation ceremony for volunteers and organising committee of the Le Tour de Langkawi at a leading hotel in Seri Kembangan yesterday.

"We must give sportsmen and women the support they need to achieve success."

Dr Mahathir specially mentioned Datuk Kamaruddin Abdul Ghani, who recently won an equestrian endurance race of 160km in Melbourne.

The 54-year-old Kamaruddin, executive director of Bukit Kiara Resort Equestrian Club in Bukit Kiara, won the middleweight and middle-heavyweight categories.

On the Tour, Dr Mahathir said with the success of the race in the last five years, he expects the Tour to be held on

a bigger scale in the future.

The Tour, which was initially to be held around Langkawi island, is now recognised as the biggest road race in Asia and offers the third biggest prize money in the world, amounting to RM1.5 million.

He thanked all the sponsors who ensured the success of the race and cycling fans who made the event memorable.

"It was very heartening to see so many fans brave the rain and hot weather just to catch a glimpse of the riders," said Dr Mahathir.

He hopes more sponsors would support international events organised in Malaysia. The sponsors acknowledged yesterday were Telekom, Gamuda, Petronas, Tourism Malaysia, Proton, Genting, Mas, Milo, Perodua and Inokom.

"The number of sponsors for international events is a very encouraging sign. I hope to see this trend continue as the sponsors also receive a lot of mileage by getting involved in such events," said Dr Mahathir.

First Cartel chief executive chairman Wan Lokman Wan Ibrahim and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein were also present at the ceremony where Dr Mahathir presented certificates to the 880 officials and volunteers.