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Mahathir-F1

FORMULA ONE HAS GIVEN MALAYSIA GLOBAL ATTENTION

SEPANG, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that the Formula One race has put Malaysia at the centre of global attention.

This is a privilege which only a few events of the world could provide, he said.

"With the Formula One success, Malaysia is never the same again," he said in his message in the official programme for the Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix which starts today at the Sepang International Circuit.

Dr Mahathir, the prime mover behind the staging of the F1 race held for the first time here last year, said the world now has a better perspective of Malaysia, its people and their beautiful homes.

He said the inaugural F1 event last year, picked as the best Grand Prix, was a great success and hoped SIC would build on this achievement to further develop motorsports and create the country's own champion.

"Setting new international standards, Malaysia has again shown its achievement to the world. A young united nation with strong dedication, firm commitment, a far sighted vision and always ready to take on new challenges," he added.

The Prime Minister said it was a great accomplishment made possible by the serious efforts of all Malaysians.

"I had never doubted their potential and capabilities when the Government first decided to take on the challenge in 1996 to organise an F1 event in Malaysia," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is currently attending the Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) in Seoul, is expected to officially open the event on Sunday at the RM286 million circuit.

Through F1, the country hopes to continue making strong international impact in the near future, he said.

On the Malaysian GP which is the final leg of the season, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was proud to continue to be a part of the prestigious world class event.

"We will continue to upgrade our efforts to ensure F1 continues to be a great event in Malaysia," he added.

Dr Mahathir also thanked F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone, the chairman of Formula One Management and the FIA for their assistance in making this Malaysian dream a reality.

He also acknowledged Petronas's contribution in sponsoring the event and becoming Malaysia's strongest supporter for the nation's motorsports events.

"We would also like to share the success with the other sponsors and the media," the Prime Minister said.

-- BERNAMA

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