

PM: More support for sports now

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. Malaysians are becoming more supportive of sporting events compared to in the past, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Mahathir extended his personal gratitude to the people who had gone out to watch cyclists, who passed their areas in the Le Tour de Langkawi race in February.

"Without their support, such an event would not have been attractive or able to give vigour to participants of the race. They would not have been that successful without anyone watching the race," he said in his speech to thank volunteers and sponsors of the Le Tour de Langkawi 2001.

"Thank God that Malaysians are becoming more supportive compared to the past."

Mahathir said in the past,

sometimes the people will not clap or cheer sportsmen. He said as a politician, he found that Malaysians sometimes did not respond.

"When we waved to them, they would look behind as if we are waving to someone else. They had such a lack of confidence then," he said.

However now, he said, there is some progress, where the people wave first.

"I found that they are very supportive ... cheered loudly to encourage cyclists in the race and this gives a good picture and some sense of encouragement to the participants to return to Malaysia," he said.

"I hope more Malaysians will be able to go out and support the race as this is the only sports event which is free-of-charge," he added.