

PM approves renaming of Minardi F1 team

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has consented to renaming the Minardi Formula One team as KL Minardi Asiatech as part of efforts by the team and the Government to promote the capital as a tourism and business destination.

The renaming of the team was made after Minardi F1 team principal Paul Stoddart held a meeting with Dr Mahathir at his office here.

The meeting was also attended by Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein.

Hishammuddin told reporters later that the discussion also touched on the Minardi-Malaysia link-up to identify potential drivers in different levels, from go-karts to Formula One.

He said the initial logo of the Minardi team was still being discussed, adding that it may include an image of the Petronas Twin Towers.

"The renaming of the team

is part of the country and the team's co-operation to promote Kuala Lumpur as a centre for sports tourism.

"The launch of the new image will be held in early January while the team will introduce its new car and engine in February.

"We have also confirmed that Alex Yoong will drive for Minardi in the 2002 Formula One season, which means that he will become the first Malaysian to drive an F1 car at the Sepang F1 circuit," Hishammuddin said.