

31 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Motorsport

MOTOR SPORTS ATTRACTING MORE PEOPLE, SAYS MAHATHIR

SEPANG, Aug 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the growing interest in motor sports among Malaysians is a healthy development.

He said motor sports had drawn the interest of many people including automobile manufacturers and producers of ancillary products like tyres and oils.

"Motor sports in Malaysia has attracted many people although there are still those who go for illegal racing," he told a press conference after presenting prizes to the winners of the Merdeka Millennium Endurance Race 2001 at the Sepang Circuit.

Dr Mahathir said the government would continue to promote motor sports and would consider requests like tax exemption for imported motor sports products.

On the current race, he said the number of entries had risen to 88 although the circuit was meant to accommodate only 77 entries.

Dr Mahathir said the success of local drivers in the race despite the presence of international drivers showed that they had great interest in motor sports and upgraded their skills.

He said the quality of local drivers and their vehicles had also increased.

Citing the example of the Proton Rally team which had constantly won rally events, he said Malaysians were now going for endurance and speed racing.

The trio of Jeffrey Wong, Admi Shahrul and Tommy Lee in a TVR Chimaera, won the race which started at midnight.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on the success of the three entries using Perodua's newly launched model, Kelisa.

The Prime Minister, who drove a Kelisa to attend the National Day Parada at the Merdeka Square this morning, said the 1,000cc car was a good car with high performance.

-- BERNAMA

HS MAM SK