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Tanjung Puteri swamped by thousands of fans

THE stretch of the Tanjung Puteri waterfront in Johor Baru yesterday provided the organisers of the Malaysian leg of the UIM F1 Powerboat with a headache - a pleasant one, though.

Well over 100,000 spectators, according to Police estimates, thronged the 1.2km route yesterday to catch a glimpse of the world's fastest powerboats in action.

Among the spectators were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Crown Prince of Johor, Tunku Ibrahim Ismail.

The sheer numbers forced many spectators to jostle for a vantage position to catch a glimpse of the race. And many were not so lucky.

Even the iron railings of the houses along the stretch were not spared as the spectators climbed the fencing to catch a better view of the 55-minute race.

It was a scene which prompted the promoter of the race, Nicolo diSan Germano to comment: "What a turnout today and I believe it was difficult for many of the spectators to really enjoy the race.

"But don't worry. We have plans for next year which, when implemented, would be able to accommodate three times the numberr of today's crowd.

"What happened today was fantastic. The crowd, the organisation and the venue. I've told your Prime Minister that Malaysia have set new standards in the organisation of the UIM F1 Powerboat."

There were unhappy faces among the sea of people gathered at Tanjung Puteri yesterday with many complaining they could not really get to see the race because of the limited space along the waterfront.

"Maybe temporary steel structures with seatings for the fans at some vantage points would solve the problem," one disappointed fan said.

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