

PM happy with outcome

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad commended Malaysia's on and off-the-track expertise at the Rotax World Finals which ended at the Moraq International Karting Circuit in Langkawi yesterday.

After enjoying the 25-lap race, which was won by South African Claudio Pizza-Musso, Dr Mahathir said: "It was a thrilling race. I think the race was very close."

"I'm also pleased with the organisation of the event which received a lot of spectators."

On Malaysia's campaign, Dr Mahathir, who is also the patron of the Finals, said: "We cannot hope to win at once because we have to participate many more times before we can win. They (the drivers) have done better than before."

The track is also up to the highest standard and a little longer after it was upgraded. The three-day Finals, which was held for the first time in Puerto Rico last year, attracted more than 2,000 spectators, which included about 500 primary school children.

To top it off, the Finals was also broadcasted live to television viewers on TV3.

Organising chairman Mohamed Fauzy Hamid said, "We have clearly set the benchmark in kart racing as the participants were very pleased with our organisational standards. We cannot look back now because we have to move ahead to get things moving at this level."

"Now that Malaysia is well known in the fraternity, there will surely be more world class races held here in future."

"Kart racing, which forms the base for future single-seater drivers, is part of the government's efforts to groom world class champions under the Eight Malaysia Plan which hopes to promote the country through sports tourism."

While the Finals had flagged off a new season for Malaysia, the next big thing on the motorsports calendar would be the 2002 Petronas Malaysian F1 Grand Prix in March.

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