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Sports-Cycling (ETOM)
SOPHISTICATED PHOTO FINISH EQUIPMENT FOR RACE

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- The inaugural Gamuda Eagle Tour of Malaysia, scheduled in Langkawi from Aug 14 to 18, will be using sophisticated and state-of-the-art photo finish equipment and results system to ensure the dissemination of accurate and fast results of the race.

This is the first time that the equipment, manufactured by Lynx System Developers in Boston, which produces and distributes Sports Data products, will be used in a race in the country.

Clear Mission Sdn Bhd executive director Abdullah Kamal Shafi'i said the FinishLynx photo finish system had been used widely in all the world's major cycling Tours, including the three Grand Tours -- Tour de France, Giro d'Italia and Spanish Vuelta.

Sophisticated and reliable photo finish equipment is vital in major cycling events and stage races and other sports like rowing and horse racing to ensure accurate results, especially during mass sprints, at the finish.

The system also enables its users to generate results rapidly and then post them onto the Internet to scoreboards and local and remote databases.

"It is hoped that by using such sophisticated and modern technical equipment, we will be able to upgrade the standard of organisation. At the same time, we'll be able to learn new technology which might be useful in organising future events," Kamal in a statement, here, today.

In the 2002 Tour de Langkawi, the organisers introduced a new timing device (transponder) which was mounted on the riders' bicycles to provide accurate and fast results.

Meanwhile, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), the host broadcaster of the race, will air 30 minutes delayed telecast of the race daily from Aug 14 to 18. The programme, featuring the highlights and thrills of the race, will be aired on TV1 from 11.30pm.

"The RTM crew will be made up of almost 30 staffers and will provide in-depth coverage during the 30-minute programme. We hope to bring the race closer to the people, especially those outside Langkawi. We hope to create bigger interest in the sport and attract more people to take up cycling as a leisure and competitive sport," Kamal said.

Kamal added that the whole entourage would comprise 600 people, including teams and riders.

Meanwhile, the teams and riders will start arriving tomorrow.

China, Mongolia, Ireland, Team Krone of Norway and Team Down Under will arrive here tomorrow before flying to Langkawi on Sunday.

Japan, Korea, Philippines and Vietnam will arrive in Langkawi on Sunday while Team Suisse and Austria, Giant Asia Racing and Albania, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Iran, Indonesia, Team KL and Selangor will be on the island on Monday.

A total of 21 teams will compete in the five-stage 407.2km race which offers total prize money of RM200,000 (US\$52,000). The race is organised by Clear Mission Sdn Bhd under the patronage of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

-- BERNAMA
HRS ZS JK