

31 AUG 2002

Sports-Motor Racing (MME)

NAZA-JASERI RACING TEAM WIN THE 2002 MME

SEPANG, Aug 31 (Bernama) -- Top Malaysian driver Tommy Lee made it three in a row when he clinched the 2002 Merdeka Millennium Endurance (MME) race at Sepang Circuit here today.

Partnering British Nigel Albon and Tunku Hammam, the trio completed 262 laps in the 12-hour endurance race, which was held in conjunction with the Merdeka Day celebrations.

The victory was made sweeter as Lee won it in a Porsche GT3 after winning the earlier editions in a Proton Waja and a TVR Chimaera in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

"I'm just plain lucky to have a very strong team and the support of two great drivers," said Lee at the press conference after securing the victory, here today.

Starting from the front row on the second grid along with pole sitter, team Amprex Motorsports, the Naza-Jaseri Racing team took full advantage of the mishaps encountered by the race favourites (Amprex).

After a close battle for more than six hours, the Japan GT racing team was hit by mechanical problems forcing them to retire after completing only 112 laps.

It was the Naza-Jaseri Racing team's show all the way as Lee, Tunku Hamman and Albon took turns to stretch their lead against their rivals up to the chequered flag.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave away the prizes.

Team Ethob Racing from Hong Kong, featuring Clive Bate, Gerry Kipling and Nick Thomas, finished second overall to take honours in the Class A category, which featured production cars above 1901cc and production sports cars of any capacity.

Team Symphony WRC Motorsports, represented by Aminuddin Omar, Lai Wee Sing and Fahrizal Hasan, finished third overall after completing 241 laps and came in second in the class A category.

Choo Yong Choon, Siah Woei Pyng and Kok Lee Foon, who competed in a group C Honda Civic category, were the star performers of the event when they finished fourth overall and ahead of all the group B drivers and most of the group A drivers.

The group B category is for production cars between 1601 to 1900cc while the group C class is for production cars between 1501cc to 1600cc.

Jerry Ng, Kok Pak Chiang and Lim Ee Chek, emerged the winners in the class B category when the trio ended in fifth position overall after completing 239 laps.

The race was flagged off by Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein last night. A total of 77 cars started on the grid and only 42 cars made it until the finish today.

-- BERNAMA

ERE AO