

22 JAN 2002

Sports-Ironman (Mahathir)

PROMOTE TRIATHLON SPORTS VALUES AMONG MALAYSIANS, SAYS MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said all parties involved in the Langkawi Ironman Triathlon 2002 Championship should continue to promote triathlon among Malaysians simply for its positive values.

"I do hope that apart from being host to this event, the Kedah state government and Langkawi Ironman Endurance Marathon (LIEM) Sdn Bhd would promote the values of the sport such as strong mental, physical fitness and discipline as well as a healthy lifestyle," he said in his foreword in the souvenir programme of the 2002 Championship.

Dr Mahathir said the event, which has strong following worldwide, would help to boost Langkawi's image as a tourist destination apart from promoting the resort island as one of the world's important triathlon sports venues.

"I would like to congratulate the Kedah state government and LIEM Sdn Bhd for their combined effort to stage the Ironman Malaysia Triathlon 2002 in Langkawi," he said.

"To the foreign participants, I again bid a warm welcome and hope that you will take time off to savour the wonders of this beautiful island and to the local triathletes, I wish you all the best and Malaysia Boleh", he said.

Meanwhile, several top triathletes arrived today for the gruelling sporting event on Sunday.

Among them is professional triathlete Randy Cadell of the United States, a handicapped triathlete who is making his second appearance this year.

Cadell started his training with his specially modified bicycle around the island to acclimatise with the humid conditions here.

According to the organiser, defending champion Bryan Rhodes of New Zealand and runner-up Lothar Leder of Germany were expected to arrive on Thursday.

Tissnik Raynard of South Africa, who finished third last year, and his countrymen Glen Gore, who finished fifth, are scheduled to arrive on Friday.

-- BERNAMA

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