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RLYC to host International Regatta

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THE Royal Langkawi Yacht Club (RLYC) will host the inaugural Royal Langkawi International Regatta 2003 on March 11-16.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has agreed for the overall challenge trophy to be named "Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy".

The race is planned to be an annual event marking the end of the racing season on the west coast of Malaysia and Thailand.

Chairman/Commodore and principal founder member of the RLYC, Tunku Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman said during the press conference at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club on Saturday: "I was sad to learn our Prime Minister's decision to step down in October.

"So the idea of naming the trophy after him came about with Langkawi's first International Regatta, in commemoration of his leadership."

Dr Mahathir will be launching the Regatta and the opening ceremony of RLYC's new marina and seawall on March 11.

RLYC has just completed expanding its berthing capacity from 44 berths to 201 berths as well as the construction of a permanent sea-wall (breakwater) to protect the marina.

Regatta manager Robert Forrester said there will be six classes (three more than the Raja Muda International Regatta) and anticipates a maximum of 60 boats participating.

"The six classes are divided into Racing, Cruising A, Cruising B, Multihull, Openwater and Sports," said Forrester.

"So far, we have 12 boats at club registration and 17 boats in the IRC registered H/C, but we are expecting more over the course of time."

The races will vary from the open water triangle course, Pulau Payar Island race, Pulau Segantang Island race and the Harbour race, with distances from 56km, to 44km, to 32km (triangle course), to 16km (bay).

The Royal Langkawi International Regatta is categorised into two divisions: the larger boats (IRC registered H/C) will compete for the Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy, whilst the club registered cruisers will compete for the RLYC's Commodore Cup.

It has been confirmed that there will be an all-women crew and an Under-20s competition with participants from Malaysia, Thailand, and possibly the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

* ASEAN nations will be invited to send their yachtsmen to the Kedah/Langkawi Open Premier Regatta on Feb 14-16.

Organising committee chairman Datuk Abu Bakar Taib said the States would also be invited to the regatta which will have the optimist and laser categories contested.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be invited to launch the regatta, Abu Bakar, who is the Agriculture Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary told reporters after chairing the organising committee meeting in Langkawi yesterday.

Over 200 yachtsmen are expected to take part in the event.