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Mahathir-LTdL

LTdL PROVES MALAYSIA A PEACEFUL COUNTRY, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Le Tour de Langkawi (LTdL) cycling championship which concluded here today proved that Malaysia is a peaceful country.

He said the live coverage of the annual event, in its eighth edition, provided opportunity for the people to watch the great event as well as giving them the chance to have a look at Malaysia, which he described as a country that many people did not know much about.

"We did not get a good press most of the time but here there is a chance for people to look at Malaysia as it is.

"And I think they realised it. This is a very peaceful country where people of many races mix and we have no problem with them," said the Prime Minister when interviewed by an ESPN commentator after the race at the Dataran Merdeka, here today.

The final stage of the race was also aired live over RTM1. The LTdL, which started in 1996, was a brainchild of Dr Mahathir.

Asked if he would continue giving support to the race after he steps down as the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir answered affirmatively.

Dr Mahathir has announced that he is stepping down from all government and party posts in October after the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit. He has named his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as his successor.

Meanwhile, speaking to the crowd before presenting the award, Dr Mahathir said the 2.2 status race was a great cycling championship success story and thanked the organisers for their very best effort to upgrade it further.

He expressed confidence that the race would have a great future and that all major riders would want to participate in the championship, especially in this country as it would mark their achievement in a tropical country.

"It is very hot here, I can see some people can stand the heat even better than those from the tropical country," he said.

The Prime Minister said those involved in the race had done their very best and that they would get a lot of return.

Dr Mahathir then presented prizes to all the winners.

-- BERNAMA

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