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Sports-Ironman (Mahathir)

WORLD CAN LEARN FROM IRONMAN PHILOSOPHY, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- The world can gain a valuable lesson from the Ironman philosophy where race, religion and domination matters little, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"The Ironman race is about how one can accomplish a seemingly impossible task when we really set our minds to it," Dr Mahathir said in his foreword in the souvenir programme for the Langkawi Malaysia Ironman Triathlon Championship.

Dr Mahathir, who is the patron of the Langkawi Ironman event, said the race showcased the universal bonding of athletes in an ultimate test of strength and endurance.

"Malaysia is a young Islamic nation that is peaceful and safe from the threat of terrorism," said the Prime Minister, adding that this was evident from the participation of foreign triathletes, who made up about 90 percent of the competitors in the Langkawi triathlon championship.

A total of 408 triathletes from 29 nations are taking part in this year's Ironman Langkawi race as compared to 383 last year.

Dr Mahathir said the government encouraged more support and sponsorship from the private sector and hoped that the public sector would play a more prominent role in similar events.

"We wish to see the Langkawi Ironman Triathlon set the benchmark as the "friendliest Ironman" (competition) in the world and hope that the visitors will be able to experience the warm hospitality of Malaysians and their stay here will be a most pleasant one," he said.

Dr Mahathir also congratulated Langkawi International Endurance Marathon Sdn Bhd (LIEM), the organiser of the Langkawi Ironman race for staging the 2003 event, the fourth in its series.

-- BERNAMA

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