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Tertiary education centres should form racing teams

MALAYSIA'S racing fraternity should work towards encouraging local universities, colleges and institutes of higher learning to have their own racing teams as an effort to develop motorsports in the country.

Launching the Merdeka Millennium Endurance (MME) at Desa Sri Hartamas yesterday, Federal Territory Minister Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said this would generate bigger participation at the grassroots level, adding the 12-hour endurance race was also ideal for students to put their knowledge to practice.

"As a full-fledged racing event, which demands a team to make preparations in every aspect of the sport from securing sponsorship, marketing, team management, drivers' selection and development of the car and mechanical team, it is ideal for colleges and universities as part of their educational programme," he said.

An endurance race with three drivers to a team, the Merdeka Millennium Endurance race was introduced in 2000 as part of efforts by Sepang International Circuit to give a platform for local teams to compete professionally and against the best in the region.

"While I hope that SIC would continue to build this event, it is important as well for them to ensure that local racing enthusiasts would also continue to be a prominent feature of the MME," Isa said.

With Aug 16 the closing date for team registration, SIC has already received 60 entries.

The event had 102 entries last year and the organisers are expecting an even bigger entry for the 2004 event.

Besides top drivers from Japan, Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and the UK, the MME will also feature the best of Malaysian drivers.

In his speech, SIC chairman Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir said the race was not just a platform to provide local drivers an opportunity to race.

"Through the Merdeka Millennium Endurance race, SIC hoped to get everybody who is linked in the motorsports industry to come together and show off their capabilities, creativity and skills."

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