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Sports-Cycling  
UCI MERIT AWARD FOR DR MAHATHIR

GENTING HIGHLANDS, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's strong support in the organization of several world class cycling events in the country deserves recognition, said Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) President Datuk Seri Darshan Singh Gill.

"UCI (International Cycling Union) Management Board has decided to give the UCI Merit Award to the Prime Minister," he said when met by reporters during the Genting Challenge - Tribute to the Prime Minister, organised by the Malaysian National Cycling Federation (MNCF) here.

A total of 350 riders took part in the race, which began at Batang Kali, 30 kilometres away.

Darshan said Dr Mahathir had put Malaysia in the world map for several major international cycling events, such as the Le Tour de Langkawi, World Cycling Championship in 1997 and Track World Cup Championship 2000-2001.

He said no date had yet been fixed for award presentation but it would be made before Dr Mahathir's retirement at the end of the month.

Darshan said the decision to give the award was made at a meeting in Hamilton, Canada last Oct 9 during the World Road Cycling Championship.

The deputy president of MNCF, Datuk Naim Mohamad who is also the organising chairman of the Genting Challenge, said the first 22 riders to reach the finishing line would be given the honour to present the UCI Merit Award to Dr Mahathir.

"We choose the figure 22 because it marks 22 years of service rendered by Dr Mahathir as the Prime Minister," he said.

Former national rider Shahrizan Selamat, 20, was the first to cross the finishing line, completing the race in one hour 35 minutes and 25 seconds well within the time frame of five hours set by the organiser.

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