

Cabinet To Determine Extension Of F1 Contract After 2015
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SEPANG -- The cabinet will decide whether to continue hosting a Formula One (F1) race after the existing contract expires in 2015, Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak said.

"Let's see first. The cabinet will look into the matter," he said in response to a question from the media whether Malaysia would continue hosting the race beyond 2015.

This follows growing calls in Australia asking the country to cease hosting the race due to losses.

The prime minister said hosting an F1 race had enhanced the country's profile in the international arena.

Najib, who watched Sunday's Petronas Malaysian F1 Grand Prix at the Sepang Circuit, noted that the spectators' attendance this year was better than last year's, recording a total of 105,018 people during the three-day event.

Asked whether there would be more Malaysian companies getting involved directly with F1 teams, Najib said the number was sufficient at the moment.

There are three Malaysian-backed teams this season namely the Lotus Renault GP through Proton, Mercedes GP Petronas F1 Team through Petronas and Team Lotus, founded by Tony Fernandes, CEO of AirAsia Group.

Sebastian Vettel of Red Bull Racing won the race today, clocking 1 hour 37 minutes 39.832 seconds while Jenson Button of Vodafone McLaren Mercedes and Nick Heidfeld of Lotus Renault GP finished second and third respectively.

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohammad, who was responsible for bringing the F1 race to Malaysia during his tenure, said the race this year was historic because of the Malaysian involvements in F1 teams.

"I think it's a great race. It's very good to see basically a Malaysian car (Lotus Renault GP) getting the third place in Malaysia.

"It is an International event that attracts million of viewers. I am happy," he said.

(Bernama)