

All set for a thrilling ride in LTdL

132 riders pedal their way to first stage in 24th edition of the race

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KUALA LUMPUR: The 24th Le Tour de Langkawi (LTdL) got off to a rousing start with 132 riders from 22 teams beginning the first stage of their 1,200km journey across the peninsula.

After the flag-off by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad near the Petronas Twin Towers in Jalan Ampang here at noon yesterday, the cyclists ended the opening stage at around 4pm at Tampin Square in Tampin, Negri Sembilan.

The premier cycling event - the brainchild of the Prime Minister - features eight stages in total. The event that started in 1996 was once Asia's richest bicycle race.

Also present yesterday were Dr Mahathir's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, Federal Territories Minister Khalid Abdul Samad, Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah and Petronas president and group CEO Tan Sri Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin.

Italian Andrea Guardini, riding for team Bardiani CSF, is the favourite for the title this year. The 29-year-old rider has won 24 stages in the event from 2011 to 2018.

Today, the second stage will reach Dataran Pahlawan, Melaka, at about 4pm, and onwards to the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya tomorrow for stage three.

Stage four will see athletes arriving at Resorts World, Genting Highlands, on April 9, and then to stage five at Dataran Warisan, Taiping, on April 10.

They are set to arrive at Masjid Zahir, Alor

Setar, on April 11 for stage six, and Underwater World at Pantai Cenang, Langkawi, on April 12 for stage seven before concluding the competition in Pekan Kuah, Langkawi, on April 13.

As the contestants pedal their way across the peninsula, side events will be held at the end location of each stage of the race.

These include live screenings of the race starting from 3.30pm at the finishing point for each stage, except stage six in Alor Setar, live communication between the riders and the teams during the last 50km to the finishing line, a military tattoo performance by the Malaysian Armed Forces, a BMX performance and a cycle ball mini tournament.

Apart from that, there will also be activities held by the sponsors, National Sports Institute, Health Ministry, cultural performances and more.

Members of the public are invited to watch the race and participate in the side events at the finishing points.

They can also keep track of the race with the latest updates on the LTdL 2019 website at www.ltdlangkawi.my or on social media accounts @ltdlangkawi for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

LTdL is a multiple-stage bicycle race held in Malaysia and conceived by Dr Mahathir with the objective of placing the country on the sporting and tourism map.

Held since 1996, the race usually begins in Langkawi and includes major landmarks such as Genting Highlands and Dataran Merdeka.

The race is sanctioned by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) as a 2.HC (hors category) race as part of the UCI Asia Tour calendar, and is the biggest event in Asia.



Starting point: Wan Zulkiflee (right) welcoming Dr Mahathir to the Le Tour de Langkawi flag-off ceremony in front of KLCC. Also present is Malaysian National Cycling Federation vice-president Datuk Amarjit Singh Gill.

Due to its reputation, the race regularly attracts top teams from the Pro Tour as well as national teams from a number of European and Asian countries.

This year, Petronas took on the role of the title sponsor and will continue to do so for the next three years.

Genting Malaysia has come on board as the main sponsor.

Check out StarSport for LTdL first stage results:
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