

## **Event to put us on world golf map**

**New Straits Times**

**August 07, 2012**

**By SEAN AUGUSTIN**

PUTRAJAYA: A PGA-SANCTIONED event to be held in the country next year announces Malaysia's arrival as a major international sporting destination, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

Speaking at the launch of the US\$6.1 million (RM19 million) CIMB Classic 2012 yesterday, Najib said he looked forward to playing with Tiger Woods, who had confirmed his participation.

"I am truly looking forward to it and, of course, Tiger Woods' return after a 13-year hiatus," he said, referring to the 10-time PGA Player of the Year winner.

Apart from Woods, four-time PGA Tour winner Ben Crane and 2009 PGA Tour winner Bo Van Pelt will also be returning to the tournament this year.

Najib said Malaysia was in a unique position to spearhead the development of golf in the region as it was blessed with a beautiful environment that provided the perfect backdrop to some of Asia's best golf courses. The country's "legendary hospitality, heritage and culture", he said, also offered players more than golf.

"It is our pride and privilege to host this world-class sporting event.

"I have no doubt that with the support of Malaysians and the PGA, we would continue to excel as the region's foremost destination for professional golf."

Present were Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen and CIMB Group chief executive officer Datuk Seri Nazir Razak.

Nazir had earlier announced that next year's edition would be an official money event on the PGA Tour and part of the season-long FedEx Cup competition.

Next year's event, Najib said had underscored how far the country had grown to become a major player in the international arena, while the CIMB Classic was also an indication of Malaysia's strong golfing heritage.

The government, he said, had always supported the development of golf and golf tourism in the country and the CIMB Classic was an example of that commitment.

Last year, CIMB Classic was broadcast to more than 400 million homes in 70 countries.

Nazir said in line with its elevated status, next year's event would feature 78 players, compared with the current format of an elite 48.

The prize money will also be increased to US\$7 million from US\$6.1 million.

Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/event-to-put-us-on-world-golf-map-1.121834>