

Hosting F1 Race A Good Investment For Malaysia – Najib

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SEPANG, March 21 (Bernama) -- Hosting Formula One (F1) race, the biggest motorsports event in Malaysia, has proved to be a good investment, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Thursday.

The Prime Minister said the Malaysian Grand Prix which was incepted in 1999 and this year marking its 15th edition, created thousands of jobs.

"In 2011 alone, the Grand Prix here in Malaysia created over 4,700 jobs," he said in his message published in the event's official programme book.

He said over the course of the Grand Prix this weekend, "100,000 spectators will come to this country, many will stay longer, unwinding on one of our beautiful islands or ancient forest."

He added that when the race was first held, Malaysia was just emerging on the international stage.

"Our most iconic building, Kuala Lumpur's Twin Towers, had just opened. In fact, our whole country was opening up to the world. Welcoming new investors, new tourists, new opportunities and a new race circuit here in Sepang," he said.

Meanwhile, Sepang International Circuit (SIC) chairman, Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir noted that through the publicity and media exposure on F1 in Malaysia, it had generated a great marketing and promotional platform for the country.

"While it seemed like Formula 1 was all about entertainment and fun, the economic impact and world exposure it gave Malaysia was clear, quantifiable, justifiable and cost effective.

"Tens of thousands of foreign visitors come to enjoy the Grand Prix weekend and travel to other parts of the country before and after the race," he added.

Mokhzani said: "With all the requirements that the sport needs, to host teams, drivers, fans and the public, it always brings out the best in SIC, Kuala Lumpur and Malaysians."

Three Formula One teams with Malaysian connections -- Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team, Lotus F1 Team and Caterham F1 Team -- once again are expected to draw a large number of spectators to the circuit this year.

The second leg of the World Formula 1 Championship at the Sepang Circuit starts tomorrow with the official practice session.

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