

U.S. May Not Attack Syria, Says Mahathir
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PUTRAJAYA, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- The United States might not be attacking Syria after its failure to bring peace to Iraq, which it attacked with the help of its allies, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said former US president George W. Bush in launching the attack on Iraq in 2003 after accusing it of developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) had clearly made a big mistake because until today there was no peace in Iraq and the WMDs were never found.

Dr Mahathir said this here Wednesday at a press conference on the Langkawi International Mountain Bike Challenge organised by Human Voyage (M) Sdn Bhd and which will be held on the resort island from Sept 30 to Oct 5.

Also present were Human Voyage chief executive officer (CEO) Datuk Malik Mydin and Langkawi Development Authority CEO Tan Sri Khalid Ramli.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the latest development in Syria following the United States to be reportedly preparing to launch a military attack on Syria.

"I don't think they (the United States) can succeed if they attack Syria...President Barack Obama needs to obtain the support of members of the US Congress first," he said.

On the government's decision recently to raise the price of RON95 petrol and diesel by 20 sen per litre, Dr Mahathir said it would help lessen government expenditure as the amount of subsidies was rather high in Malaysia.

On the mountain bike challenge, he said it was the best promotion for the tourism sector in Langkawi and Malaysia in general as the event would be broadcast on television worldwide, thus attracting millions of viewers.

"It is costly to promote Malaysia through TV ads, but the mountain bike championship will be able to promote Malaysia directly to the world. Hence, organising this championship is not a waste of money.

"Based on my experience meeting all kinds of people abroad, there are still many who don't know where Malaysia is," he noted.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would benefit in the long run through the mountain bike challenge as it would also have foreign participants while the international media would provide wide publicity on the event, hence drawing more tourists to Malaysia including Langkawi.

Meanwhile, Malik, a former long-distance swimmer who swam across the English Channel in 2003, said the mountain bike challenge offered US\$125,000 in cash prizes (RM410,625).

"The qualifying round for the UCI Mountain Bike and Trials World Championships (UCI MTB Marathon Series) will be the curtain raiser for the mountain bike challenge in Langkawi.

"The selection of Langkawi as the venue for the event shows the recognition given to it and its increased reputation," he said.

Those interested to participate in the UCI MTB Marathon Series and Langkawi International Mountain Bike Challenge can check out <http://www.mtbmalaysia.com>. The closing date for entries is Sept 15.

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