

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Maybank Cycling Series Johor Sees Over 2,500** **Cyclists Conquer Streets of Johor**

* ***Malaysia Pro Cycling Team’s Mohamad Saari Amri Abd Rasim sprints to his career-first solo victory***
* ***Sukma gold medallist Khairunnisa Aleeya Saifulnizam beat Under-23 Asia Road Cycling champion Phi Kun Pan to the women’s overall crown***

Johor, Malaysia – 14 September 2024: The streets of Iskandar Puteri came alive as cycling enthusiasts from across the region gathered for the first-ever Maybank Cycling Series Johor. The event drew over 5,000 eventgoers, including family and friends, to celebrate heritage, sustainability and community spirit.

Organised by Majlis Sukan Negeri Johor (MSNJ) and KPRJ Sports Sdn Bhd (KSSB), the inaugural Maybank Cycling Series Johor aimed to promote an active lifestyle while advocating for environmentally conscious practices and supporting initiatives to preserve Johor's natural and cultural heritage.

Dato’ Khairussaleh Ramli, President & Group CEO of Maybank said, “The Maybank Cycling Series Johor represents our core belief that people are at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together cycling enthusiasts from around the region, we are not just advocating for health and well-being, but also forging a stronger, more connected community. This event has provided an inclusive and sustainable journey for everyone involved, with cyclists and their families totalling over 5,000, coming together as one. We look forward to further expanding this impactful initiative and drive positive change throughout Southeast Asia aligned with our mission to Humanise Financial Services.”

Over 2,500 cyclists from 35 countries flagged off from Sunway Big Box Retail Park Iskandar Puteri, embarking on a scenic route through many of Iskandar Puteri’s iconic landmarks including Legoland and EnerG X Park, Leisure Farm Resort, Kukup Golf Resort, The Museum Bugis coastline path, and more, tackling two categories - a challenging 120km Road Race and a 60km Fellowship Ride.

These destinations not only showcased Johor’s rich cultural heritage but also emphasised their commitment to sustainability, offering participants a firsthand experience of how these landmarks contribute to eco-friendly exploration.

In a thrilling competition, Mohamad Saari Amri Abd Rasim and Khairunnisa Aleeya Saifulnizam emerged as overall champions in the rain-soaked men's and women's races, respectively. Both Johor-born cyclists delighted local fans with their victories.

Saari dominated the men's race, crossing the finish line solo with an impressive time of 2:47:37. He finished 17 seconds ahead of his closest challengers, Tong Khoon Fung (2:47:54) and Muhammad Faheem Razen M Zaini (2:47:57).

For the 26-year-old Saari, this victory came at an opportune moment. He hopes it will boost his chances of selection for the Malaysia Pro Cycling Team squad in the upcoming Le Tour De Langkawi.

"In the final 20km, I seized the opportunity to break away from the peloton and pushed solo all the way to the finish. It's particularly satisfying because my previous wins were in bunched sprints," Saari explained.

"The Maybank Cycling Series Johor was no less competitive, as there were some quality competitors who were former members of pro tour and national teams," noted Saari, who also came out on top in the Men's Master A category and led Malaysia Pro Cycling Team to team glory.

He added, "A big shoutout to organisers and sponsors who worked tirelessly to make this event a success. It's been a while since we had a cycling event of this scale, especially after COVID-19. The state needs this kind of event badly because it's through these events that the talent pool can be expanded and new talents discovered."

Khairunnisa picked up where she left off from Sukma in Sarawak recently to make it two wins on the trot. The 20-year-old clinched the yellow jersey in emphatic fashion, clocking 2:49:48 to defeat her more illustrious national teammate Phi Kun Pan.

The reigning Under-23 Asian Road Cycling Champion Phi Kun Pan came in second with 2:59:33, followed by Nurina Qistina Zahraa Dewa Indra in third (3:04:40).

"I would say today's victory was rather unexpected. I did not set any target as I had just returned to training barely a week ago, after competing in Sukma recently," said Khairunnisa, also the winner of women’s Under-23 honour.

"Winning in my home state made it even more special. It's a great effort by the organizers because it provided amateur riders with a platform to shine. Frankly, I thought the race was challenging. It was definitely not a stroll in the park; the pace of the race was nearly, if not on par with those pro races."

Ts. Mohd Ekmaluddin Ishak, Director of MSNJ said “Our main objective was to inspire a healthier lifestyle among the community by encouraging active participation through cycling. We strongly believe that events like this play a crucial role in building a stronger and more engaged community.”

“Furthermore, the Maybank Cycling Series Johor marks a significant step towards establishing Johor as a cycling destination. By organising our own cycling series, we demonstrated the state’s commitment to supporting the growth and development of the cycling community. We are confident that this event has contributed to making Johor a more cycling-friendly state and hope this entire event will inspire more people to embrace cycling as a mode of recreation.”

“Today’s event highlights Johor’s commitment to a healthier, more connected community, while also marking KPRJ's strategic business diversification. The Maybank Cycling Series Johor is not just a sporting event but a reflection of our commitment and role as a catalyst for change in Johor's sporting landscape. By promoting and supporting the State Government's agenda, we are positioning Johor as a premier destination for cycling enthusiasts and further strengthening our presence in the sports industry. This event is a significant step towards making this series an annual tradition, contributing to Johor’s advancement and success,” said Dato’ Lukman Abu Bakar, CEO of KPRJ

While riders navigated the routes of Iskandar Puteri, Maybank Cycling Series also hosted a vibrant festival village offering a wide range of activities for attendees of all ages. The excitement included BMX downhill challenge for the extreme enthusiasts, pushbike circuit races for children, among various other engaging activities and booths. Eventgoers were also entertained by live stage performances from the Hard Rock resident music band and a cultural showcase by Yayasan Warisan Johor.

The festival also had a strong focus on giving back, incorporating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Over 250 mangrove trees were planted at Taman Negara Johor Tanjung Piai in Pontian, with a pledge to plant one tree for every ten participants.

Participants and their families left the event with a sense of fulfilment, having been part of a meaningful journey. Many are already looking forward to the next adventure.

Johor-born Olympians lent their star power to the event with special appearances. National track cycling ace Muhammad Shah Firdaus Sahrom and golfer Kelly Tan added prestige to the occasion. Muar-born Shah Firdaus recently reached the men's keirin final at the Paris Olympics, while Maybank ambassador Kelly, hailing from Batu Pahat, has represented Malaysia twice at the Olympics - in Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. Also gracing the event was former SEA Games netball gold medallist, Nur Fariha Abdul Razak who also hails from Johor.

The inaugural 2024 Maybank Cycling Series Johor would not have been possible without the generous support of its sponsors and partners including Iskandar Investment Berhad, PIJ Holdings, Johor Corporation, KPJ Healthcare, Global Synergy Sports, Grupetto, Super, Hard Rock Café Puteri Harbour, Trinidad Suites Johor, Trademark Suites by Wyndham, Ramada Suites by Wyndham The Straits Johor Bahru, Sunway City Iskandar Puteri, Meru Utama, Propain, Pro Apparel, as well as Garmin and more.

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| **2024 MAYBANK CYCLING SERIES JOHOR – 120KM ROAD RACE – MEN OVERALL** |
| 1ST | Mohamad Saari Amri Abd Rasim  | Malaysia | 02:47:37 |
| 2ND | Tong Khoon Fung | Singapore | 02:47:54 |
| 3RD | Muhammad Faheem Razen bin M Zaini | Malaysia | 02:47:57 |

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| **2024 MAYBANK CYCLING SERIES JOHOR – 120KM ROAD RACE – WOMEN OVERALL** |
| 1ST | Khairunnisa Aleeya Binti Saifulnizam | Malaysia | 02:49:48 |
| 2ND | Phi Kun Pan | Malaysia | 02:59:33 |
| 3RD | Nurina Qistina Zahraa Dewa Indra | Malaysia | 03:04:40 |

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| **2024 Maybank Cycling Series Johor – CATEGORY WINNERS – 120KM** |
| TEAM | Malaysia Pro Cycling | Malaysia |
| SPRINT | Mohamad Saari Amri Abd Rasim | Malaysia |
| KING OF THE MOUNTAIN | Mohamad Izzat Hilmi Abd Halil | Malaysia |

**About Maybank**

Maybank is among Asia's leading financial groups and Southeast Asia’s fourth largest bank by asset with close to 44,000 employees worldwide. The Group has an international network of some 2,600 offices in 18 countries including all 10 ASEAN countries and also present in international financial centres such as London, New York, Hong Kong and Dubai. With a purpose to Humanise Financial Services and guided by its M25+ strategy, Maybank provides any array of value-based solutions established on sustainable and ethical principles to meet its customers evolving needs. These extensive range of products and services, include consumer and corporate banking, investment banking, Islamic banking, stock broking, insurance and takaful and asset management. (www.maybank.com)

**About KPRJ Sports Sdn Bhd**

KPRJ Sports Sdn Bhd (KSSB) is a Sports Management and Development company set up under the Johor state government as their penultimate Sports Development initiative and is wholly owned by Kumpulan Prasarana Rakyat Johor Sdn Bhd (KPRJ).

KSSB aims to be the catalyst for all sports development programs in Johor through the uniting of all sports activities and programs under one roof. These efforts are to be planned and professionally administered by KSSB and their team of capable and experienced personnel.

KSSB’s goal is to empower sports as an industry and lifestyle, as well as acting as a catalyst to unite Bangsa Johor while transforming the people and communities of Johor to be more competitive and resilient both in sports and its related fields. As such, KSSB will bring holistic prosperity to the people and state of Johor towards 2030. ([www.kprj.com.my/sportsjohor](http://www.kprj.com.my/sportsjohor))

**About Majlis Sukan Negeri Johor**

MSN Johor, also known as the Majlis Sukan Negeri Johor, is the State Sports Council of Johor, Malaysia. It is responsible for promoting and developing sports activities in the state of Johor. The council works towards enhancing the overall well-being of individuals through sports, fostering a healthy and active lifestyle among the people of Johor.

MSN Johor plays a vital role in coordinating and organizing various sporting events and competitions at the state level. It provides support and resources to athletes, coaches, and sports associations to help them excel in their respective disciplines. The council also collaborates with schools and universities to nurture young talents and encourage sports participation among students.

One of the key objectives of MSN Johor is to identify, groom, and support talented athletes in their pursuit of excellence. It offers training programs, coaching services, and financial assistance to promising athletes to help them reach their full potential. Additionally, the council organizes talent identification programs and sports development initiatives to discover and nurture young talents across different sports.

Furthermore, MSN Johor actively promotes sports tourism in the state. It hosts and supports various national and international sports events, attracting participants and spectators from all over the world. These events not only showcase the sporting talents of Johor but also contribute to the local economy and tourism industry.

In conclusion, MSN Johor plays a significant role in promoting sports and physical activities in the state of Johor, Malaysia. Through its various initiatives, the council aims to develop and support athletes, enhance sports infrastructure, and foster a culture of sports excellence.

**This press release is issued on behalf of KPRJ Sports Sdn Bhd by INK PR Sdn Bhd**

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