

# It's on for two years

## Selangor commit to stage the Masters golf tournament

By LIM TEIK HUAT

**PETALING JAYA:** Despite the tough economic climate, the Asian Tour organisers can breathe a sigh of relief that the bigger golf tournaments in Malaysia continue to receive strong support.

The Selangor government announced yesterday their commitment to stage the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters on the Asian Tour for the next two years.

The Masters this year will be held at Seri Selangor Golf Club from Aug 5-8 with a total purse of RM1mil (US\$300,000).

Selangor state secretary Datuk Ramli Mahmud said at the signing ceremony yesterday that the government would extend their support of the Masters following a successful debut on the Asian Tour last year.

It will be the fourth major golf tournament in the country after the Maybank Malaysian Open in February and two more tournaments on the calendar for the year — Iskandar Johor Open and World Cup qualifiers.

"The Selangor Masters was a huge success in 2008 and it was publicised internationally through the Asian Tour's extensive media and television platform through ESPN STAR Sports," said Ramli.

"We are fully committed to the growth of the Selangor Masters and we will continue with our strategic efforts to ensure that it remains a top international-class tournament that will keep Selangor and Malaysia firmly on the world's golf map."

While the cream of the Asian Tour are expected to converge at Seri Selangor, led by its current Order



**The promise:** (From left) Seri Selangor Golf Club chairman Abdul Aziz Mohd Sharif, Hla Han, Ramli, Worldwide Holdings chief executive officer Nor Azlina Zakaria and the chairman, Datuk Mohd Ariff Abdul Rahman, with the Selangor Masters challenge trophy.

of Merit leader, Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand, Ramli added that they would organise a junior championship as well prior to the main event.

"The Etiqa Selangor junior championship will be held from July 31-Aug 2 at the same venue and open to all junior golfers from around the world. The champion and runners-up will qualify to play in the Selangor Masters," he said.

Ramli added that last year's dream victory by Malaysian upcoming star Ben Leong provided the impetus for young golfers to excel.

Ben held off a late charge from Thongchai in the final round to bag his maiden Asian Tour title.

"By rubbing shoulders with Asia's best players, we hope that our very own talented golfers will aspire to attain success, not just on Malaysian soil but also internationally. Ben's stunning victory was highly commendable and it will encourage young players to shoot for the stars," said Ramli.

The Asian Tour executive chairman, Kyi Hla Han, lauded the backing from the Selangor government

and Worldwide Holdings.

"It is terrific news that the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters has committed to another two years on the Asian Tour," he said.

"Professional sport is dependent on sponsorship and it is tremendous that the Selangor government and Worldwide Holdings are backing the Asian Tour through the staging of this tournament."

A total of 156 players will compete in the Masters and 36 spots will be reserved for Malaysians.