

# PM to Thomas Cup team: You can win it House, car each to spur shuttlers

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today offered a Proton Saga and a house on behalf of the Government to each of Malaysia's national badminton players as incentive to win the Thomas Cup in the final rounds in Japan from May 25 to June 3.**

Dr Mahathir said the Proton Sagas would be export models but did not reveal the location of the houses.

He said that unlike some countries where the Government taxes the players' prize money, Malaysia's does not.

"On top of that, we also give incentives. But let me remind the players that the biggest incentive is for them to win the Cup for the nation. There is no bigger incentive than that.

"The public will be with you and you should not disappoint them. We can beat the rest of the world and win the cup."

His wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, will accompany the team.

Besides the special government

reward, the team also stands to win \$80,000 under the National Sports Council's incentive scheme.

Dr Mahathir and his wife joined the badminton players for lunch at a leading hotel yesterday. Also present was Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Badminton Association of Malaysia was represented by its president Datuk Elyas Omar and deputy president Datuk Dr Fadzil Che Wan.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir told the players that it was not impossible to win the cup.

"We have the chance to succeed considering the strength of the present squad. We came close the last time but were unlucky and lost in the final.

"This time the team has been training in Genting Highlands where conditions are quite similar to that in Japan. And I understand they have been training very hard. That's a good sign. If possible, through their own initiative, they should put in extra training.

"The objective here is to win the cup and the players must discipline themselves towards achieving this target. They must not sidetrack themselves and complain of minor problems about food or something similar.

"The players should not fuss about

**What the players stand to win if they return with the Cup:**

● **From the Government:** A Proton Saga (export model) and a house each.

● **National Sports Council:** \$80,000 to the whole team.

● **Public Bank:** \$50, \$100 and \$150 for every point difference in the preliminary rounds, semi-finals and final respectively.

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*petty matters but concentrate fully on the Thomas Cup."*

He reminded the players that when they are on court, "it is all up to you. Whatever happens, make sure you give your level best and fight for every point.

"Even if you are down 1-10 for example, fight back and try to narrow the gap. On the other hand if you have a comfortable lead, don't relax and allow your opponents to catch up. Don't give the opponents a chance.

"By fighting hard, even if you lose, you will lose with integrity. But think positive and play positive."

The team leaves for Japan on Saturday.