

# BE WORLD BEST

## PM to M'sian sportsmen: Shed 'kampung champion' image

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**BANGI:** Malaysian sportsmen should shed their image of being "kampung champions" and improve their performance to world standards, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said part of the process was to inculcate a strong sense of mental self-discipline among the sportsmen.

"Discipline must not be confined to its literal meaning if athletes are to improve their performance," he said before presenting the national flag to the Singapore-bound 17th SEA Games contingent here yesterday.

In the ceremony at the Tenaga Nasional's Sultan Ahmad Shah Training Institute, the Prime Minister handed the flag to chef-de-mission Datuk Khalid Yunus.

Also present were Olympic Council of Malaysia president Tan Sri Hamzah Abu Samah, National Sports Council director-general Mazlan Ahmad and Tenaga Nasional executive chairman Tan Sri Ani Arope.

Dr Mahathir added that the sportsmen must prove that they can perform to world standards.

"This (to be world champions) may not be realised now but it lies with the future generations.

"What we must do now is to prepare ourselves, mentally and physically, to ensure that we will one day be champions of the world."

Dr Mahathir also expressed his concern that Malaysian sportsmen could only perform well on home ground.

"When they play at home, it could be that the sheer presence of fans enables them to give an outstanding performance as was shown during the KL SEA Games in 1989.

"Unfortunately, in the next Games which took place in Manila, their performance went down," he said.

He said what was lacking was the athletes' mental self-discipline.

"Athletes must be able to condition and control their thoughts and emotions to ensure that they will give the best that they can," he said.

Dr Mahathir also called on the sportsmen not to depend too much on their fans to ensure victory.