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ANWAR TICKS OFF SQUABBLING LEADERS OF SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

BUKIT MERTAJAM, April 7 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today ticked off leaders of sports associations who spent more time quarrelling with each other, rather than spending time improving the quality of sports in the country.

"Some association leaders do not have to go down to the arena as they are already quarrelling among themselves in the meeting rooms. They do that all the time without focussing on improving the quality of sports," he said when opening the "Projek 1001 Gelanggang Rakyat" for Permatang Pauh parliamentary constituency at Taman Guar Perahu here.

Anwar, who is Permatang Pauh MP, said there were some sports associations which were only creating headache than helping to assist improve the quality of sports.

As a result, he said the quality of various games deteriorated and if the situation was allowed to continue it would jeopardise the country's aspirations to produce more sportsmen of calibre.

He said the government was ashamed of the action of these individuals when the Youth and Sports Ministry, National Sports Council and its entire machinery were making every effort to prepare for the Commonwealth Games.

He said the government had spent vast amount of money to ensure the success of the Commonwealth Games but the association leaders seemed not to care.

In this respect, he urged sports associations to emulate efforts carried out by the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) and Yayasan Badminton Malaysia (YBM) to spot new talents by offering various facilities including training.

He said the move was also consistent with the government's efforts to overcome social ills among the younger generation.

Earlier the YBM's patron Datin Seri Datuk Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali said "Projek 1001 Gelanggang Rakyat" would provide badminton courts to the rakyat especially those in the rural areas.

The Rural Development Ministry had agreed to build badminton courts in 500 kampungs selected under the "Desa Wawasan" programme, she said.

She said the Youth and Sports Ministry also agreed to contribute RM3.24 million for the next two years to intensify efforts to produce potential national players.

The badminton court project was launched in Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency, Kedah last year.

Meanwhile, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin urged leaders of sports associations to heed Anwar's advice that they refrained from quarrelling among themselves and concentrate more on improving quality of sports in the country.

He said the advice was timely in view of the fact that many sports bodies were facing various internal problems which were affecting quality of sports.

He said he had discussed the matter frequently with them and took the initiative to organise a three-day convention beginning April 11 in Langkawi to give an opportunity to those involved to discuss ways of overcoming the problem.

"The convention to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was the best place for all parties to analyse weaknesses and errors committed by various sports bodies and to outline the role of sports, and

actions to be taken by the government, private sector and the sports bodies themselves to enhance excellence in national sports," he said. --Bernama

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