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Badminton-Hasmah

DR HASMAH BLASTED BAM FOR THOMAS CUP DEBACLE

KUALA LUMPUR, May 24 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's number one badminton fan, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali said she was very disappointed and embarrassed with the disunity in the national team that led to their debacle in the Thomas Cup in Hong Kong.

She criticised the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) President Datuk Dr Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan for being too soft with the professional players despite various incidents of disunity in the team before and during the championship.

"I'm totally disappointed and ashamed. The whole world knew we're not united. The players were wearing different shirts, eating at different places, using different ways to the airport and not talking to each other," she told a press conference after receiving the Malaysian Thomas cup squad which returned here this evening.

Dr Hasmah said as patron of the BAM she was very sad with the situation but stressed that she would not let this happen again.

She said winning and losing was part of the game but Malaysia should not lose because of disunity among players, coaches and officials, adding that she was not disappointed with the defeat in 1994 as the then team played with high spirit and was united.

The Prime Minister's wife said it was time for players who were not producing results to make way for the younger players to be given a chance to represent the country.

Dr Hasmah admitted that the present national players had done a lot for the country but added that there was no point retaining them if they did not have the fighting spirit anymore.

"We should toe the line now. We have bent backward too much in the past and see what had happened," said Dr Hasmah, who was at the airport after welcoming back Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad from overseas.

Hasmah, who was clearly upset with the attitude of the professional players from the Nusa Mahsuri camp, said BAM allowed them (professionals) to leave when they wanted but was sad with the action now.

"The situation is different when you are playing for the country. I have stressed in every meeting with the players that team work is very important," she said.

Dr Hasmah also said some of the criticisms in the media were too harsh but added that they would take into account all the comments to ensure that the debacle would not happen again. -- BERNAMA.

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