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Mahathir-badminton

GIVE PRIORITY TO NATIONAL INTEREST, SAS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 9 (Bernama) -- The national shuttlers should give priority to playing for the nation rather than for monetary rewards, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said the players should devote their full attention to the game and do their best in any competition to enhance their achievement and bring back badminton glory to the nation.

"We should not look at the ringgit, instead we should play in the interest of the country and the sport itself," he said at a breaking of the fast with the Thomas Cup and Uber Cup squads, here.

He also expressed his hope that the national squad would qualify for the Thomas Cup final round to be played in Hong Kong in May.

The national squad will leave for Auckland, New Zealand, next week to begin their campaign in the qualifying round from Feb 18 to 25.

Dr mahathir also advised the players not to think of the differences among themselves either in terms of age, ability or compatibility.

"We should play as a team and if we are full of confidence and initiative, we are sure to win," he said.

Meanwhile, BAM president Datuk Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan said that so far many weaknesses of the association and players had been overcome.

This augured well for the players to show their true capability in the Thomas Cup and put a stop to unfavourable speculations on badminton in the country, he added.

Abdullah also denied claims that there was no understanding and team spirit among the coaches and players in the training camp being conducted at the BAM Academy in Cheras.

"There is no problem with the question of spirit. it is just that the singles players are professionals from Nusa Mahsuri and Wira Tangkis while the doubles players are from the BAM," he said.

Fadzil said he was confident that the national squad would bring back the best results despite the short training of only a week before the qualifying round. -- Bernama

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