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Mahahtir-Sports

MAHATHIR EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER WANING SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

LANGKAWI, April 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed concern over the waning spirit of volunteer service to develop sports in the country.

If the situation was not given attention, he feared that soon the spirit will disappear altogether, he said.

He added: "If this happens, whatever contribution that is needed must be paid for in hard cash. So, we certainly can imagine what will happen to sports activities where it becomes merely a commercial activity."

Opening the National Sports Convention here, he said drastic and firm steps should be taken to revive and preserve the spirit to serve as a backbone of the spirit of sportsmanship.

Besides the spirit of volunteer service, he added that noble values in the administration of sports bodies were no longer evident among their leadership.

"What often happens is friction between them, and the result is our sports will not progress if there are groups out only to take advantage of the opportunities and to serve their self-interests," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this had led to various problems which showed that there were weaknesses in the system and structure of the management in sports bodies.

In this connection, change was needed not only among the athletes but also officials, coaches and leaders of sports organisations.

"Our weakness in efforts to create athletes who are successful and of integrity is due to ineffective leadership," he said.

He believed one of the weaknesses was the lack of ability among sports leaders in the country to institute change in approach and style in creating successful athletes and management.

The weakness was not due to limited time but the lack of vision, he said.

"Many of them have held the post for more than 10 years but they still fail to bring any success because of lack of vision for their organisation thus leading to vagueness in the development of the sport," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the government was keen to see that sports continue to be managed by volunteers through the various sports associations and clubs.

"The government will continue to play a role, especially in building infrastructure and implementing suitable programmes, and for that, the Sports Development Act is being drafted so that those involved will understand their roles," he added.

The three-day convention is attended by 250 participants from national sports bodies, government agencies and the private sector as well as present and past athletes and individuals who can contribute to developing sports.

Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin attended the opening ceremony. -- BERNAMA

ZAA LDB