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Mahathir-Convention

SPORTS NO LONGER MERELY CONTESTS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, April 10 (Bernama) -- Sports has assumed increasing importance as it was no longer merely a contest but one of the yardsticks to gauge the success and progress of a country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

As an indicator of the identity, image and integrity of a country, it should be given its proper place, he added.

"This is the role that should be understood and borne by the country's athletes," he said in a foreword in conjunction with the National Sports Convention beginning here tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir will open the three-day convention at which national sports proponents will come up with the best model for sports development in Malaysia.

Some 267 participants comprising representatives of sports associations, state governments, government agencies, academics, corporate figures, the media and athletes would attend the convention.

Dr Mahathir said emphasis should be given to building strong physical and mental discipline among the country's athletes.

In addition, strategies and techniques were required to ensure victory in competitions, he added.

Dr Mahathir said sports leaders, managers and officials should also play their roles with dedication, honesty and sincerity to achieve success for the country.

"They should set aside matters that can be detrimental to sports in the country," he said.

Reminding them that Malaysia would host the Commonwealth Games in 1998, he hoped the convention would discuss ways to further strengthen sports in the country.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said a model suitable for implementation in Malaysia was needed because the country's sports achievement was still unsatisfactory.

"The present system still has shortcomings as there are always problems," he added.

With ideas coming from the convention, an effective resolution could be reached that would give direction in the development of sports in the country, he said. -- BERNAMA

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