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Muhyiddin-Bodybuilding

CABINET EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER BAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 27 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet today expressed concern over the ban on Muslims taking part in body-building contests.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said that Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman had been directed to hold discussions with the Sarawak government following the ban imposed by the Sarawak Islamic Religious Department (Jais) last week.

"We do not want the public to have a negative impression of the country especially during preparations for the Commonwealth Games next year," he told reporters after his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting at his office here.

He said that the matter would have to be ironed out immediately as it may affect the Games.

Muhyiddin said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had issued a reminder that many Muslim nations are looking to Malaysia as a model and therefore such issues should be dealt with immediately.

He said that Abdul Hamid would submit a report on his discussions with the state religious officials to the Cabinet but no time frame had been set.

Last week, the Sarawak Bodybuilding Association received a notification from a Jais enforcement officer prohibiting Muslim bodybuilders from taking part in the "Mr Kuching 1997" contest.

However, three Muslim contestants -- Rabu Suhaili, Rusli Kassim and Bujang Jamah -- proceeded to take part in the contest. -- BERNAMA

HRS RM