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Problem must be settled soon

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SO it looks like the National Shooting Association of Malaysia (NSAM) have to accept that they are responsible for the fiasco at the Second Commonwealth Shooting championships in Langkawi.

The poor food served, weak transport system, uncollected rubbish and the ruckus created over the supposed failure of the range to meet the International Federation's (UIT) technical specification.

All of these were NSAM's doing, if not directly, then indirectly.

It was NSAM who wanted Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd and the Sports Ministry to stay out of the organisation of the championships. But they did ask for RM80,000 from Sukom.

NSAM went on to form LACOS '97, involving the Kedah State Government and a private company named Galantpac.

What credentials LACOS '97 have to be given the responsibility of organising the meet is a question nobody has answered so far. And how much money they have collected so far is anybody's guess?

Speak to Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Sukom chief operating officer Datuk Seri Manap Ibrahim and Sukom board member Datuk Ahmad Bakri Shabdin and they will all say that the buck stops with NSAM.

Documents made available to the New Straits Times show that NSAM were involved from the onset in the construction of the RM70 million range and were a party to decisions made at every turn.

NSAM assistant secretaries Muzli Mustakim, Mej Jasni Shaari and executive secretary Ong Hoon Chin were at one time or another present in all the meetings when decisions were made on range.

On the championships itself, the souvenir programme states that NSAM are the organisers and hosts.

The organising committee address is c/o of the NSAM and their president, Ally Ong, is the co-deputy chairman of the organising committee.

For NSAM senior officials like Datuk J.J. Raj and Adam Tee to point fingers at others at this juncture is most unfair.

As for Singaporean Steven Yap, who condemned the range and made alarming statements on the state of the facilities, he too was directly involved in all the decisions taken.

Yap, who is the technical delegate along with Fung Lok Nam for the ongoing championships, was fully aware of the technical deficiencies of the range.

He had in October recommended that Range A be closed for the championships and suggested that trees be planted to separate Range A from Range B.

However, UIT technical delegate Demetris Lordos found the suggestion unacceptable and on safety grounds recommended a wall be built to separate the ranges.

To better understand the issue, one has to go back to the time when the decision was made by the Commonwealth Games Council, chaired by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to have the shooting event in Langkawi.

NSAM were against the idea and wanted their Subang Range to be the venue. After some subtle threats and name-dropping, the Sports Ministry managed to convince NSAM to support the idea.

The NSAM, however, agreed on condition that the Ministry come out with RM12 million to upgrade the Subang range. The figure was later reduced to

RM6 million by the Ministry. However, the Ministry have not fulfilled their side of the bargain.

That had bothered NSAM and several top officials no end.

Wherein lies the problem? Personality clashes, differences of opinions, petty jealousies or whatever, it had better be settled soon or the nation will suffer at the Commonwealth Games.

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