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Vietnam-Badminton

SOON KIT AND KIM HOCK BEAT SINGAPORE PAIR

By: Mohd Ghazemy Mahmud

HANOI, Nov 20 (Bernama) -- The top Malaysian doubles pair of Cheah Soon Kit and Yap Kim Hock today defeated Singapore's Patrick Lau and Zhao Jianhua in their first match at the Vietnam Open badminton tournament here.

The Singaporean pair was outwitted 15-10, 15-8 after a tepid start during the first set at the Hanoi Indoor Stadium where the five-day tournament is being held.

The Hanoi tournament is the second international outing for Kim Hock after last week's Thai Open where the national pair only got through to the last 16.

Before the Thai Open, Kim Hock had been absent from the badminton scene since May due to injury and subsequent surgical operation on his shoulders.

The seeded Soon Kit-Kim Hock pair, the remaining flag carrier in the competition, will meet either the Danish pair of Larsen Jesper and Martin Kundgaard Hansen or China's Luo Yigang-Chen Gang tomorrow.

Today's preliminaries also saw the exit of hopeful Mahathir Mustaffa out of contention after a spirited game before he was beaten by Denmark's seeded player Kenneth Jonassen 15-1, 17-18, 15-5.

Yesterday, Mahathir beat Thai Sirachai Panpatchara 15-10, 15-4 and Englishman Mark Constable 15-4, 18-16 to get through today's round.

Three other shuttlers brought by Badminton Association of Malaysia -- mixed doubles pair Tan Kim Her and Norashikin Amin and women's singles player Woon Sze Mei -- crashed out earlier in their first preliminary matches.

The Hanoi tourney, which began yesterday amid fanfare and a flurry of confusion by the organisers, is the last leg of the badminton circuit before the World Grand Prix championships in Jakarta next month.

The Malaysian doubles pair must win this championship, beating the likes of South Korea's Lee Dong Soo-Yoo Yong Sung and Indonesia's Ricky Subagja-Rexy Mainaky, to book a place in Jakarta.

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