

PM ticks off shuttlers, officials //

LANGKAWI: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that athletes and officials in the country seemed to be ignoring national interest.

"They seem to be giving too much priority to their personal stand," he said.

He said this when asked for his opinion about the controversy surrounding the selection of athletes for next month's Commonwealth Games, particularly in badminton. *S 16.8.98*

"I don't want to interfere in this matter. Like what Lat and M. Desa (cartoonists) said (in their sketches), ask them (the athletes and officials) to fight with each other, who win that person should go (*suruh dia tumbuk, siapa menang dia masuk*)," he said.

Professional shuttler Roslin Hashim of Nusa Mahsuri club was in the centre of the controversy after the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) dropped him from the Games' squad for skipping centralised training.

BAM had earlier listed Roslin but

ignored his stablemate Rashid Sidek and Nusa Mahsuri coach Misbun Sidek when naming the squad for the Games from Sept 11-21.

Roslin went AWOL from national training one day after he reported to camp, saying he preferred to train under Misbun.

The Prime Minister also said he was happy with preparations made at the Langkawi International Shooting Range, the venue for Commonwealth Games shooting events.

"I found out that the preparations have been very good. Even foreign shooters said that they were satisfied with the range and described it as the best in the world," he said.

"If there is anymore to do to further improve, it would be the landscaping," he said.

The RM80mil range was completed last year and was the venue for the Langkawi Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championship, held in November.