

09 AUG 1998

Badminton-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR TAKES BADMINTON PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS TO TASK

LANGKAWI, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today chided national badminton players and officials for giving priority to their own stands over national interests.

"(Our) Players and officials seem to view lightly the question of national interests and instead give priority to their own stands," he said.

He said this when commenting on the controversy surrounding the selection of badminton players for next month's 16th Commonwealth Games.

"I do not want to intervene in this matter," he told reporters after visiting the Langkawi International Shooting Range Malaysia (LISRAM) here, the shooting venue for the Games.

"I think the easiest way is to follow the suggestion of (cartoonists) Lat and Mat Desa that they slug it out...the winner gets in," Dr Mahathir 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.

Asked on his visit to the RM80 million LISRAM, Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the preparations done but suggested that more trees be planted to improve the landscape.

In fact, local and foreign shooters had described the shooting range as one of the best in the world, he said.

-- BERNAMA

NH JM YBY