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Good on you Mani, boo to you MAAU

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SOMETIMES, it is difficult to fathom the minds of the National Sports Council-Malaysian AAU joint committee.

At a time when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that nepotism and cronyism should be abolished, the NSC-MAAU joint committee for the Commonwealth Games served up a real stinger last week.

When the committee finalised the squad for the ongoing Asian Track and Field championships in Fukuoka, they omitted M. Manimagalay, the Sea Games 400m champion.

Incidentally, Manimagalay is the first Malaysian woman 400m champion in the Sea Games since the glory days of V. Angamah and Saik Oik Cum. The reason for her omission was close to unbelievable. The committee said she and 1,500m runner A. Munusamy were dropped because they did not participate in their respective events at the Malaysian Open.

Furthermore, the committee said that they failed to meet the qualifying marks for inclusion in the ATF squad.

On the other hand, they included five athletes who have been faring miserably all year and at the ATF - Zaki Sadri (long jump), Nur Herman Majid (110m hurdles), Azmi Ibrahim (200m), Yazid Imran (javelin) and Carol Lucia Alfred (200m).

The committee arrogantly said these athletes would meet the marks required of them in Japan.

In a desperate move to rectify the matter, MAAU president Datuk Khalid Yunus tried to calm the situation by offering Manimagalay and Munusamy air tickets to Fukuoka with expenses from his own pocket.

While Munusamy accepted the offer, Manimagalay and best friend K. Soloseeni packed their bags in a huff and went home. They didn't like the manner in which the Sea Games champion was being treated.

Manimagalay said MAAU had treated her shabbily just because she ran in the 200m instead of the 400m in the Malaysian Open. It was thus better for her to quit the sport.

Moreover, she was nursing an ankle injury at that time and she ran in the 200m just to test out her form.

So much for MAAU's promises and their so-called hopes for the KL Games.

In short, Malaysia have lost two promising athletes because the MAAU and NSC were inconsistent in their decisions and moods.

One athlete who suffered a similar treatment was middle distance ace B. Rajkumar, who never recaptured his best form after being ignored by NSC for the National Sportsman Award despite having won the 800m gold at the ATF in 1985.

Sometimes, success does not pay. Manimagalay is capable of doing well after that fine performance at the Sea Games in Jakarta last year.

Kudos to her because she stood by her principles. Perhaps it was a hasty decision.

At the end of the day, no one is a winner. The one to suffer is the country.

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