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C'wealth-Rugby

RUGBY SQUAD AIMS FOR TOP 16 PLACING

LANGKAWI, June 30 (Bernama) -- The national rugby squad hopes to be placed among the top 16 teams participating in the Kuala Lumpur '98 Commonwealth Games rugby competition.

Commonwealth Games Rugby Project Manager Lt Kol (B) Omar Mohamed said even though it was a tough task, the national squad will go all out to achieve it.

The national rugby squad has promised to put up a strong fight against rival countries competing in the event, he added while waiting with the rugby and shooting squads at the Langkawi International Airport for the arrival of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today.

Both the squads are undergoing centralised training here as part of preparations for the games from Sept 11 to 21.

Omar said Malaysia considers South Africa as its main rival in its group while Cook Island and Trinidad and Tobago, the other teams in the group, should not pose a problem.

He said the 14 players in the 98 Jaya Project began their training stint here on June 24 under Welsh coach Mark James. One more trainee didn't turn up because of health problems.

He said a list of 10 of the best players selected at the end of July would be submitted to the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM).

Besides training at the Langkawi Sports Complex, the players are also trained at the beach to build up their stamina.

As part of their final preparations, the squad would participate in a rugby tournament in Bangkok from July 18 to 19, he said.

The squad will leave for Alor Setar today for friendly matches against several local teams.

-- BERNAMA

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