

10 AUG 1998

Games-Muhyiddin

TAKE DR MAHATHIR'S COMMENT SERIOUSLY, SAYS MUHYIDDIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's comment that national badminton officials and players should place national interests above their personal stands should be taken seriously by all parties, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

"The remark is most appropriate and timely. It should be viewed seriously by all athletes and sports officials in the country," he said when commenting on the Prime Minister's comment which was made in Langkawi yesterday.

The Prime Minister was merely expressing his desire to keep sports out of controversy for the sake of protecting Malaysia's image, Muhyiddin told reporters after launching an athlete incentive scheme sponsored by Sony (M) Sdn Bhd for next month's 16th Commonwealth Games.

Muhyiddin hoped that athletes and officials would give priority to national interests above those of individuals and associations.

"(Our) Players and officials seem to view lightly the question of national interests and instead are giving priority to their personal stands," Dr Mahathir said when commenting on the controversy over selection of badminton players for the Games from Sept 11-21.

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

Muhyiddin said athletes selected to represent the country were playing under the national banner and not in their individual capacity.

"As such the Prime Minister's view should be accepted by all athletes and they should concentrate on efforts to improve their performance," he said.

The Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) and professional club Nusa Mahsuri were embroiled in yet another round of controversy when BAM dropped Nusa Mahsuri's Roslin Hashim from the Games' squad after he had walked out of national training camp.

Roslin cited his preference to train under Nusa Mahsuri's coach Misbun Sidek as the reason for going AWOL from centralised training.

Muhyiddin's success in mediating between the two parties over an earlier squabble about training allowances had indirectly led to the selection of Roslin to the national squad.

-- BERNAMA

AR YBY