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Mahathir-Volunteer

VOLUNTEERISM REFLECTS PATRIOTIC SPIRIT

KUALA LUMPUR, May 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the volunteerism culture should be cultivated among Malaysians so that the nation is respected by the world.

"A race is not developed and respected and does not have high honour if its culture is so low that it is not willing to do volunteer work," he said at a meeting with the 1998 Commonwealth Games volunteers at the Mines exhibition centre in Sri Kembangan, near here.

He said he was thankful that so many had offered their services as volunteers to make a success of the games which will be held on Sept 11-21.

He said the success of such a big sporting event depended on its management, the country's capability to provide various sports facilities and the athletes' performance.

Expressing the "Malaysia Boleh" slogan, Dr Mahathir said any duty performed by the volunteers was a noble task.

"Moreover, the role of volunteers shows our dedication, our nation's success...hence, I believe those who offer themselves as volunteers reflect Malaysians' patriotic spirit," he said.

He said Malaysia's success in its bid to host the games was itself something to be proud of, especially when the championship was normally held in developed Commonwealth countries.

As such, it was important for the volunteers to constantly safeguard the country's image to ensure that the foreign visitors returned home with a picture of Malaysia as a highly civilised country.

Dr Mahathir hoped that as volunteers they would not object to any task assigned them on the ground that it was beneath them.

We must make sure everything is clean. Even if there are 100,000 spectators at the stadium, we must keep it clean even if we have to pick up rubbish with bare hands. Cleanliness reflects national character.

Dr Mahathir also stressed the importance of maintaining cleanliness of the toilets not only at the sports complexes but also in public places.

He advised the volunteers to be polite even when dealing with rude visitors.

A total of 5,000 of the 20,000 volunteers attended the meeting. Present was Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Dr Mahathir also advised the national athletes to devote their time and energy to their training to achieve success at the games.

"I appeal to athletes to sacrifice by putting aside anything that would not contribute to their success," he said.

He said that as host, Malaysia did not want to be left out in the medal tally.

Although Malaysian athletes were smaller than athletes from other countries, there were many events like weightlift, badminton, boxing and swimming in which Malaysia had a chance to won medals, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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