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Ghani-Academy

JOHOR TO BUILD BADMINTON ACADEMY TO TAP YOUNG TALENTS

JOHOR BAHRU, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said today the state government would build a badminton academy to scout for new talents for the future development of the popular sport among Malaysians.

He said the state government had identified a 1.6-hectare site adjacent to the Johor Tennis Academy in Taman Perling which had started operations.

The facility to be known as the Johor Badminton Academy would not be confined to Johoreans alone but to all Malaysians in the country, he said when opening the 1999 Premier Cup Badminton championship at the Johor Baharu City Council Indoor Stadium here.

Also present were the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, deputy prime minister's wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood and Ghani's wife Prof Datin Jamilah Ariffin.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to close the championship on Saturday.

Ghani said the state government would seek private sector contribution to run the academy which would incur huge operational expenditure besides cooperating with the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM).

An estimated RM500,000 is required a year to manage the badminton academy to be built under the same concept of the National Badminton Academy in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

Initially, 20 Form One and Two students would be recruited and the number of trainees would be increased in stages in future, he said.

Ghani said the active involvement and strong support from Dr Siti Hasmah for badminton also brought fame to the country not only at national-level but also in international championships.

"Her high commitment to badminton had spurred people from all walks of life to show interest in the sport," he said.

One hundred and seventy players from 13 teams of the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) as well as elected representatives from throughout the country are taking part in the tournament which started yesterday.

-- BERNAMA

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