

23/05/1999

Wheelchair tennis champions honoured

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Call them the equivalent of Pete Sampras and Martina Hingis - on wheelchairs.

Zulkifli Mohd Ali, 37, and Yuhanis Adnan, 31, are bound to their wheelchairs due to injuries, but they are champions in wheelchair tennis.

For their achievements, they were honoured today as this year's Tokoh Pekerja Lelaki dan Perempuan for the disabled category in conjunction with Workers Day.

The roar of approval by the crowd at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil was reflective of their athletic prowess.

"You just need to go out there and work," said a confident Yuhanis when asked how she got herself back on track after a spinal injury from an accident in 1990 paralysed her legs.

"You just focus on your ability, not disability," she said. "You will realise that you could do so much that you thought you couldn't."

After being bedridden for two years, Yuhanis is now a lecturer in sports psychology with Universiti Malaya.

Ruhanis has won numerous competitions, including the singles title at the Thai Open '98 and Festic Games in Bangkok.

Just as impressive, Zulkifli got the crowd roaring when the list of his singles titles in international wheelchair tennis championships were announced, including three consecutive Thai Open championships, Dutch Open '98, Japan Cup '98 and British Open '97.

Zulkifli, who runs a television and radio repair shop, is flying to Florida in search for another title in a few weeks.

Eleven employees and companies received awards for excellence from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Themed Bersatu Teguh Negara Kukuh, 200 contingents from the public and private sectors participated at the gathering.

Starting with a colourful dance and choir, the workers recited a pledge, followed by speeches by Human Resource Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek and Dr Mahathir.

Other Workers Day 1999 Awards and recipients are:

- Tokoh Pekerja Lelaki: Senan Abdul Samad (Malaysian Shipyard and Engineering Sdn Bhd).
- Tokoh Pekerja Perempuan: Salmee Sohana Abd Manaf (RTM).
- Caring and Benevolent Employer Award: Tenaga Nasional Bhd.
- Workers' Savings Promotion Award: Rhombus Sdn Bhd.
- Ideal Estate Award: Ladang Chenor, Pahang.
- Workers' Skill Development Award (big industry category): Harris Advanced Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd.
- Workers' Skill Development Award (small and medium industry): Pack Sdn Bhd.
- Workers' Safety and Health Award (big industry): Amoco Chemical (M) Sdn Bhd.
- Workers' Safety and Health Award (small and medium): Kimia Zue Huat Sdn Bhd.
- Exemplary Union Award (public sector): Peninsula Malaysia Malay Forestry Officers Union.
- Exemplary Union Award (private sector): Malaysian Airlines System Union.

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