

12 FEB 2000

Gerakan-Sky Jump

GERAKAN WANTS MINISTER TO INTERVENE IN SKY JUMP DISPUTE

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 12 (Bernama) -- Gerakan today called on Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein to intervene in the on-going battle in the press over the blotched attempted sky jump over the South Pole.

Party vice-president Dr S. Vijayarajam said it was obvious that someone was not telling the truth.

He said the minister should call both parties face to face and thrash the matter out frankly.

"The people involved should be told in no uncertain terms to refrain from carrying on the diatribes in the newspapers on threat of withholding further Government grants to finance the expedition," he said in a statement issued here.

Dr Vijayarajam said the sad part was that false information had even reached Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was led to believe that the jump was successful.

He said would-be-adventurers, in their zeal to achieve a creditable feat, must retain a certain degree of maturity and integrity.

"There is no reason to be ashamed to admit that, given the difficult conditions and constraints, they had to jump over Patriot Hills and not the Pole itself. That alone is an achievement," he said.

He also urged Hishammuddin to investigate on the money loaned to them as it was tax-payers' money.

"Such funds could have been put to good use elsewhere," he added.

-- BERNAMA

hs sk