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Sports-OCA (Muwaffak)

OCA MEMBER HAILS DR MAHATHIR AS GREAT LEADER OF ASIA

PUTRAJAYA, July 18 (Bernama) -- Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Evaluation Committee member Dr Muwaffak Fawaz could not hide his excitement when he met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, here, today.

Dr Muwaffak was lost for words when asked about the meeting.

"I'm happy to meet Dr Mahathir. You know he is a great leader in Asia and I have been admiring and following him since he became the prime minister in 1981. I did not expect to meet him here although I had a wish to meet him in person one day," said the Jordanian after concluding a two-day inspection visit, here.

The OCA evaluation committee was here to inspect Kuala Lumpur's bid to host the 2006 Asian Games. The committee had visited two other bid cities, Doha and New Delhi, and will head for Hong Kong, the last bidder, tomorrow.

Dr Muwaffak said he suprised when Malaysian officials took the four-member OCA delegation to meet Dr Mahathir.

"It was not in the schedule. I'm very happy to meet the Great Leader of Asia," said Dr Muwaffak, who is the OCA's sports committee chairman.

He said it was the first time that the OCA inspection team had had the opportunity to meet a head of government in person after two similar visits to Doha and New Delhi.

"Dr Mahathir's desire is to see the Games held in Kuala Lumpur, not for anyone, but for the younger generation. I admire his drive and the vision he has for the youth in this country," Dr Muwaffak said.

The other committee members are OCA vice-president and delegation head Muhammad Latif Butt, OCA treasurer Santiparb Tejavaniya and manager of international relations Vinod Tiwari.

Dr Muwaffak said Dr Mahathir showed serious government support for sporting events which, according to the prime minister, was one of the ways to prevent the younger generation from getting involved in unhealthy activities.

"We will strongly mention Dr Mahathir's support and vision for the 2006 Asian Games in our recommendation," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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