

Be strong, says Dr M

SUN - 5 SEP 2001

By **S. Danendran** and
Gary Mark Nagan

PUTRAJAYA, Tues: The success of the 21st SEA Games will be in jeopardy if athletes allow petty issues to disrupt their preparations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad advised athletes at the flag handing-over ceremony at Dataran Perdana here not to be too sensitive if they were unhappy with treatment from their coaches, officials or even the govern-

ment as the priority is the SEA Games and everything else should be put aside.

"The priority is the Games. Other matters are irrelevant," said Dr Mahathir.

"If we are easily hurt by certain actions, then it is a sure way of failing to achieve success as it would disrupt our focus."

He advised the SEA Games contingent to have strength of mind and to not be easily swayed by external interferences.

The prime minister officially handed over the *Jalur Gemilang* to the chef

de mission Datuk Wira Mazlan Ahmad at Dataran Perdana today.

Dr Mahathir said that the national athletes have the potential and a lack in physical size should not be a deterrent to excel in their various events.

Instead, they need to be more resilient mentally if they want to improve.

"It is a question of having mental toughness over physical strength," said the prime minister.

"The willingness to try and to not be easily discouraged is crucial if you want to succeed."