

MAAU target in tatters

Our athletes collapse as Thais rule the fast lane



IT WAS a day of high drama for the Malaysian contingent as two athletes collapsed and another, though announced as the winner was later deemed otherwise.

Then, the men's 4x100m squad broke the national record as the national athletes ended the penultimate day of athletics with only one gold medal to show.

And with that, the Malaysian AAU's hopes of meeting their revised target of 12 to 14 gold medals were also left in tatters as Malaysia finished the fourth day of competition with a total haul of eight gold medals.

G. Saravanan bagged the only gold medal for the day when he won the men's 50km walk at the Tasik Titiwangsa route.

And at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad witnessed Azmi Ibrahim coming within a whisker of dethroning Thai hotshot Reanchai Seehawong in the final of the men's 200m.

In fact, for a brief period, that was the announcement made over the public announcement system Azmi first, Reanchai second and R. Ganeshwaran third.

Azmi had started his lap of honour when the official announcement was made and it was not in the Malaysian's favour. But by then, Azmi was nowhere to be found.

However, the confusion and embarrassment could have been avoided if only the announcers had waited for the replay to be shown on the scoreboard. While it was announced that the results were unofficial, the close race and the uncertainty of the outcome should have been given due consideration before making an announcement.

There was some consolation when the relay quartet broke the national record of 40.06s when Watson Nyambek, R. Ganeshwaran, Azmi and Nazmizan Mohamed clocked 39.83s.

And Azmi dedicated his two silver medals to his sick mother Esa Teh who is in critical condition at the KL General Hospital because of cancer.

"All these is for my mother. It does not matter what colour but I dedicate this medals to her," said Azmi.

And the 25-year-old promised that he will be back.

"I will take a short break but it would not be too long as there are quite a number of competitions next year."