

Holiday recognition for schools

KLJALA LUMPUR: Schools nationwide can observe Sunday or Monday as a public holiday, the Cabinet declared yesterday in appreciation of the efforts put in by teachers and students during the 21st SEA Games.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the Prime Minister had agreed to allow the public holiday for schools because many teachers and more than 8,000 students were directly involved in the SEA Games besides their large turnout to give support.

Schools whose week starts on

Sunday can take Sept 23 as the public holiday and those starting on Monday can take Sept 24, he said.

"The Cabinet congratulated and thanked the national contingent, volunteers, police and military personnel, students and those who helped make the SEA Games a success," he said after chairing his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting.

At a news conference after closing the Games on Monday night, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad declared Saturday a public holiday following

Malaysia's triumph' as overall champions.

It was, he said, a gift to Malaysians whose support motivated national athletes to stamp Malaysia's supremacy for the first time in the 42-year history of the regional games.

Malaysia bagged 111 gold, 75 silver and 85 bronze medals, dethroning defending champions Thailand, whose medal haul was 103 gold, 86 silver and 89 bronze.

In PUTRAJAYA, Human Resources Minister 'Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said the holiday

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was a gazetted one and must be observed.

He warned employers of "terrible consequences" if they refused to abide by the Government's ruling and grant their employees a holiday this Saturday.

Dr Fong said under Section 60(D)(1)(b) of the Employ-

ment Act 1955, an employer could be fined up to RM10,000 for each employee not granted their right to a holiday.

He, however, added that for those employees who were unable to avoid work, employers would have to pay them double shift or double overtime, or replace an off-day for them.