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SEA-Hishammuddin

2002 ASIAN GAMES, C'WEALTH GAMES THE NEXT TARGET

JOHOR BAHRU, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- After the impressive performance shown by Malaysian athletes in the ongoing SEA Games here, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad now wants preparations to be drawn up so that they would also put up an excellent performance in the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games to be held next year.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said today he had received instructions from the prime minister to make detailed preparations for the 2002 Asian Games and Commonwealth Games immediately after the completion of the ongoing 21st SEA Games.

He said the 2001 Gemilang Project had now ended and the ministry must work hard to draw up a new programme in preparation for the 2002 Asian Games in Pusan, South Korea and Commonwealth Games in Manchester, United Kingdom.

"I have been asked by the prime minister to do the preparations as soon as the current SEA Games end," he told reporters after visiting the venue for weightlifting at the Taman Johor Jaya Multipurpose Hall, here.

Hishammuddin later gave away prizes to winners of the men's final 105kg Snatch/Clean & Jerk event.

In the event, Thailand's Therdkhiat Puekkasem won the gold medal while Indonesian athlete Junaedi took the silver and Malaysia's Jerry Nonong took the bronze.

Hishammuddin, who was happy with the performance of the national squad, hoped the Malaysian medal tally would continue to rise in the closing stages of the games.

"Malaysia have collected 66 gold medals so far. This is the country's highest in the history of the SEA Games and we are searching for the 67th gold," he said.

He was confident that the solid support given by the Malaysians would inspire the national athletes further in the medal chase at the SEA Games.

"I hope Malaysians would come out in numbers to give moral support to the national athletes who are in high spirit," he said.

On the decision to have some of the games venues outside the Klang Valley, he said it was most appropriate as it enabled all Malaysians to witness the competitions.

-- BERNAMA

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