

04 SEP 2001

SEA-Mahathir (Gold)

GO FOR GOLD WITH CONFIDENCE, SAYS MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed confidence that Malaysia can do well in the 21st SEA Games if the athletes give their best and are focused on the task at hand.

"I am confident that in certain sports, Malaysia will achieve success.

"Maybe in certain events it will be difficult for us to taste success but even if we cannot be champions we should try our best not to be left too far behind," he said when handing over the Jalur Gemilang to chef-de-mission Datuk Mazlan Ahmad here today.

Present at the ceremony were Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) president Tunku Imran Tuanku Ja'afar and Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein.

Malaysia are targeting to win 80 golds in the regional Games from Sept 8 to 17. At the last Games in Brunei two years ago, Malaysia won 57 golds to finish second overall behind Thailand.

Dr Mahathir said with homeground advantage Malaysia should be able to perform better compared to the occasions when they competed outside the country.

Addressing athletes and officials participating in the Games, Dr Mahathir said those picked to represent the country had a big responsibility not only to themselves but also to the nation.

"The country's image rests on the shoulders of you all and you should carry the name in a responsible manner so that we can achieve excellence and success, not only for yourselves but also for our country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were solidly behind the athletes and they should adopt a positive attitude and give their all to win honours.

"I hope all our athletes will have a sense of responsibility about their performance because they are representing the country and we want our country to be known for certain abilities," he said.

"I am confident that our national athletes have the ability to overcome any physical weakness by strengthening their spirits. If we try hard enough, we can overcome any obstacles," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister urged the athletes to fully concentrate on the Games and not to be bothered by petty problems that could affect their spirit and focus.

"We should focus on winning, other matters are irrelevant. Other matters have no place at all until the competitions are over," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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