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Budget-Sports/BM

SPORTS MINISTRY GETS RM227.5 MLN IN 2003 BUDGET

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The government will allocate RM227.5 million to the Youth and Sports Ministry next year to ensure the success of various sports programmes and to promote new activities like extreme and motor sports, speed boat race and yatching.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, announcing this in the 2003 Budget tabled today, said the government would continue to expand and encourage sports programmes and activities.

This, he said, was not just as an effort to cultivate a healthy lifestyle but also to attract more international sports enthusiasts to participate in the nation's sports activities.

Dr Mahathir said the government was proud of the seven gold medals haul by the Malaysian contingent at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester two months ago.

But he added: "Even though we are still able to perform well in some sports, we lag behind in others."

Dr Mahathir said the government wants all parties, especially in sports associations, to make a diagnosis and undertake urgent measures to overcome existing weaknesses rather than indulge in internal squabbles.

"We must be more confident and toughen our spirits to regain the glory of national sports," he said.

The prime minister urged everyone concerned to treat the upcoming Asian Games in South Korea as a challenge to prove that Malaysia had the capability to attain greater success.

"As for the national congient, prove that Malaysia Boleh (Malaysia Can Do It)," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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