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Face the consequences, MAAU

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AGAINST the backdrop of one of the most monumental decisions that may shape the face of Malaysian sports - the suspension or deregistration of the Malaysian AAU - the national body in a fit of desperation has deemed it fit to embroil Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the controversy.

And in what could be interpreted as a frontal attack on Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein and his ministry in their handling of the problem, the MAAU memorandum to the Prime Minister is supposed to explain the current issues afflicting the sport.

But ironically, it was not Hishammuddin or the ministry who ordered the shake-up in Malaysian athletics.

That came from the Cabinet in its meeting on Sept 19 last year, directing Hishammuddin to formulate strategies. Hence the formation of the Task Force a week later, to find the cure for the ailing sport.

The Task Force after months of deliberating submitted its findings to the Sports Commissioner last week. Two options were open to the Commissioner - suspension or deregistration.

The MAAU aware of the options, want to present their version to Dr Mahathir. At least that's what its president Datuk Syed Mohamed Aidid Syed Murtaza had said about the memorandum.

He had said it was not an appeal, but an explanation of the current problems faced by the sport.

Does that therefore imply that the Sports Minister and the Sports Commissioner will be out of line or dictatorial if they decide to suspend or deregister MAAU?

Under the jurisdiction provided by the Sports Development Act 1997, the Sports Commissioner has the power under article 20 of the Act to suspend or revoke the sports body's registration.

And the Minister, under Section 22 of the Act, has the authority to appoint an ad hoc or pro tem committee for the interim period in the event the sports body is suspended or deregistered.

What would have been more prudent - if that's possible of the current council members - is to accept their fate in good faith, and help the ad hoc or pro-tem committee to put athletics back on the right track.

After all, isn't that what every true blue MAAU official wants?

What was amazing was that even after the formation of the Task Force, MAAU officials were still engaged in mud-slinging matches. They were unrepentant, even showing no fear of the consequences.

None of them believed that a suspension or deregistration was an option the national body had to confront.

Now that the reality of being suspended has struck them in their faces, they go running to the Prime Minister for help.

But the process of either suspension or deregistration is already in motion.

It's understood that today, the MAAU will receive a show cause letter from Sports Commissioner Datuk Mahamad Zabri Min, asking the association why it shouldn't be either suspended or deregistered.

The association will be given 14 days to explain, after which the Commissioner will decide on the next course of action.

So it would seem that what MAAU should be doing right now is not to bother the Prime Minister who already has his hands full running the

country, but to convince the Commissioner that the MAAU shouldn't be suspended or deregistered.

But to be fair to the MAAU, there are some genuine officials who have contributed immensely to the development of the sport, and have sacrificed much of their time and money for its good.

However, suspending the association does not mean the end of the world for these hard working officials. For, like truth, these honest officials will also prevail in the end.

But until then, let Hishammuddin handle sports, and leave the PM to handle the country.

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