

21 DEC 2002  
Sabah-Councillors  
SACKING FOR COUNCILLORS WHO HAMPER TAX COLLECTION

KOTA KINABALU, Dec 21 (Bernama) -- Local councillors in Sabah who hamper tax collection by the local authorities have been told to buck up or face the sack.

State Local Government and Housing Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Tun Said said today that the ministry would be monitoring all councillors, half of whom are politicians, to ensure that they performed up to expectation.

"Politicians who sit on the council who do not cooperate in the tax collection effort will be sacked or have their contract not renewed," he said when contacted here.

Salleh was asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of some local authorities for being lax in tax collection.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the finance minister, had said that given that many politicians served on the boards of local governments, efficient tax collection might make them unpopular.

Asked on the tax collection performance of local authorities in Sabah, Salleh said that it was improving but a lot more still needed to be done to collect what was due to the government.

On whether there were cases of politicians, who sit on the boards of local governments, not cooperating in tax collection efforts, he said: "There had been such problem in certain local authorities but the number is small...things are improving now."

He said several measures had been introduced to facilitate tax collection. They included the setting up of more payment counters and the appointment of professional agents to collect taxes on behalf of the local authorities.

"We have been telling the local councils to be financially independent. We are making it a top priority for the year 2003," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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21 DEC 2002  
Sports-Football (Akmal)/BM  
I'M NO MOKHTAR DAHARI, SAYS AKMAL RIZAL

From Hamdan Saaid

SINGAPORE, Dec 21 (Bernama) -- Akmal Rizal Ahmad Rakhli refuses to be labelled as the new "Mokhtar Dahari", instead the national football player said he is still far behind when compared to the legendary striker.

Akmal Rizal, who has scored two goals in as many matches in the on-going Tiger Cup tournament here, admitted that he is nowhere in the calibre of the prolific Mokhtar who shone in the 70s and 80s.

"I never had the chance to see him (Mokhtar) in action but I was told that he was very good and had star quality. Definitely he was the best (striker) then, in Malaysia as well as Asia.

"To say that I am on par with him is wrong. There are a lot of aspects which I need to grasp to improve my game," he said after a training session here today.

Kedah-born Akmal Rizal, 21, is Malaysia's top hitman in the Tiger Cup competition after Perak's Khalid Jamlus was left out from the squad.

The striker, who played for France's division two outfit FC Huegnon two years ago, was among those instrumental in helping Malaysia qualify for the semifinals in Jakarta next week.

Malaysia, the runners-up in the inaugural Tiger Cup tournament in 1996 and third in the 2000 edition, qualified for the last four in style after beating Singapore 4-0 on Wednesday and Thailand 3-1 yesterday.

Akmal Rizal's bursts of speed towards the opponents' goalmouth and his stinging attempts have reminded Malaysian fans of the stocky-built Mokhtar who until today has no equal in the region.

"However I have no qualms if the fans want to compare me with the late Mokhtar.

"I will not be carried away with their praises but will focus on developing my skills," he said.

-- BERNAMA

HRS HRS ZUL