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Sports-Squash

ARNOLD TO LEAD CHALLENGE IN ASIAN JUNIOR MEET

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 20 (Bernama) -- Timothy Arnold will spearhead Malaysia's challenge in the boys' section of the Asian Junior Squash Championship, which will be held in Islamabad from Feb 1-10.

The other members of the boys' team are Mohd Nafzahizam Adnan, Mohd Shahril Shahidan and Fabian Faurillo.

Arnold is also Malaysia's best bet in the boys' individual category, an event which Malaysia have made a big impact.

Chris Chan made it to the final in 1989 while Ong Beng Hee and Mohd Azlan Iskandar won the individual title in 1999 and 2001 respectively.

The Squash Rackets Association of Malaysia (SRAM) are confident that Arnold, with his recent good form, could lead Malaysia to a strong finish.

SRAM president Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir said the team's toughest opponents would be defending champions Pakistan.

In the girls' category, the team are banking on Lim Yoke Wah, Delia Arnold, Sally Looi and Shenny Ong Li Ying to deliver the goods.

"The boys should be in the last eight while the girls should at least be in the semifinals for the individual event in the upcoming championship," he told reporters after the handing over of flag and attire to the team here today.

He said for the team events, the boys were targeting a semifinal appearance while the girls, the final.

"SRAM hope to see the team repeat the achievements of players who did the nation proud, like Nicol David, Ong Beng Hee and Mohd Azlan Iskandar," he said.

The team will leave for Islamabad on Thursday.

Asked on Nicol's position, Mokhzani said she had yet to give them an answer but had already started training to get back into shape.

"She will probably tell us of her decision after the Chinese New Year. However, she will not be joining any tournament in the near future as she wants to be fully fit before participating," he said.

The national squash queen will not be playing in the coming KL Open but will prepare herself for the Las Vegas Open in March.

Nicol, who failed to win the gold in the last Asian Games in Busan, has not been in good shape lately following the departure of her personal coach.

-- BERNAMA

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