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Sports-Badminton (Hishammuddin)

NO STOPPING PARTIES WHO WISH TO REWARD HAFIZ

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 (Bernama) -- The Youth and Sports Ministry will not stop any parties who wish to reward Hafiz Hashim for his feat in ending Malaysia's barren run in the All England singles championship for 37 years.

Its Minister, Datuk Hishammudin Tun Hussein, said what was being suggested by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was that Hafiz's brilliant career should not be spoilt by being rewarded with too many gifts and incentives.

Yesterday, while congratulating Hafiz for his triumph in the All England, Dr Mahathir called on the state government not to lavish the young shuttler with too much rewards as this could affect his career.

Dr Mahathir had said that Hafiz showed bright potential to progress further and the latter should not be pampered by too much rewards, like what happened to previous Malaysian champions.

"As for the ministry, Hafiz will be given the same incentives similar to that awarded to others.

"The important thing is he should know that 23 million Malaysians are solidly behind him. This is the biggest kind of support and is cannot be valued in terms of money".

Hishammuddin told reporters this after receiving signatures for Peace Malaysia's signature-collecting drive for world peace, here today.

Last Sunday night, the unseeded Hafiz regained some badminton glory for Malaysia after he beat defending champion and first seed Chen Hong of China 17-14, 15-10 in the men's singles final.

The last Malaysian to win the singles crown was Tan Aik Huang in 1967. Punch Gunalan, Misbun Sidek, Foo Kok Keong, Rashid Sidek and Ong Ewe Hock came close after this but none managed to win the coveted trophy.

Razif and Jailani Sidek did win an All England title in 1982 but it was in the men's doubles.

Hishammuddin also commended the good work carried out by national singles chief coach Misbun Sidek, who during his heyday was an international class shuttler.

"We cannot deny Misbun's capability as success is not achieved individually, it needs years of planning," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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