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Budget-Youth

RM300 MILLION TO IMPLEMENT NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME\

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government will implement the National Service Programme involving some 100,000 youths to imbue them with strong self-resilience.

The Prime Minister said that towards this end, RM300 million had been allocated in the Budget 2004 tabled at the Dewan Rakyat here.

"This programme will include basic military training, civics education, character building and social services aimed at nurturing the spirit of cooperation, national unity and integration as well as healthy lifestyle," he said.

Mindful of the role of youths in national development, a sum of RM657.9 has been provided to the Youth and Sports Ministry.

In another development, Dr Mahathir, who is Finance Minister, said that the government would provide scholarships for athletes who had brought fame and glory to the nation who wished to further their studies locally or abroad to become coaches or managers in the sports of their choice.

He said this was a way for the government to say thank you to them for their achievements which enabled Malaysians to walk tall.

The Prime Minister said the government valued the contribution of state governments, corporate sector and non-governmental organisations in rewarding the sports champions.

"I hope our athletes will not be distracted by these rewards but continue to improve their performance," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government was really proud with the string of successes chalked up by Malaysians such as Datuk Abdul Malik Mydin who became the first person from Malaysia and South-East Asia to swim across the English Channel recently.

Equally inspiring achievements were made at the All England and World Badminton Championship, he said.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said that the government would undertake a programme whereby the provision of recreational spaces would be made compulsory at new housing projects.

"All local authorities must provide facilities such as parks and fields for recreational purposes," he said, adding that an initial RM50 million allocation would be provided to carry out this initiative.

-- BERNAMA

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