

21/02/2003

Hafiz should have stayed back

By Y.K.

LIKE all Malaysians, I rejoiced over the excellent victory of Hafiz Hashim in the All-England badminton championship.

At last the country has produced another young champion after 37 years of waiting.

I also wish to echo the words of our Prime Minister in cautioning against over-pampering the new champion. Only Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad dared to openly say what many Malaysians have been saying all along - that our former badminton heroes failed to show consistency because of the lavish rewards that were showered on them.

The result: there was no urgency to excel in badminton any more.

Our lack of consistency on the world stage has also been voiced by Indonesian great, Christian Hadinata. To quote him: "They play like champions one day but like novices the next." Sad, but that is the truth.

However, one thing has perplexed me. Why didn't Hafiz stay on in Europe and participate in the other championships after winning.

I thought his victory would have given him the confidence needed to keep playing to win.

Y.K.

Seremban