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Dr Siti Hasmah: Why was there no `live' telecast?

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THE Prime Minister's wife and Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) patron Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali expressed her deep disappointment yesterday that the Hafiz Hashim win at the All-England Championships was not shown live.

"I am very, very disappointed," she said, adding that this was a particularly sore point as television stations always televised and highlighted sporting events that had no relevance to Malaysia at all.

Dr Siti Hasmah said she had looked in vain at all channels such as RTM and Astro for the live telecast of the finals.

"I hope (it will be televised) in the future for our players in all sporting events, especially in badminton which we know we can excel in," she said.

She said Hafiz's 17-14, 15-10 victory over defending champion and top seed Chen Hong of China in the men's singles was something all Malaysians should be extremely proud of.

"After 37 years a Malaysian has again become an All-England champion, and not only that, he is only 20, the youngest winner in the 104 years of the championship," she told reporters yesterday after attending a briefing by a Palestinian delegation at the Women and Family Development Ministry.

Day after day, she said, there was nothing but depressing news in the media but the win was a great mood-lifter.

"This is a great example for Malaysian youth, that a young player with no seeding can rise to the top with his attitude and stamina," she said, adding that she had also congratulated his coach Misbun Sidek over the win.

Dr Siti Hasmah added that she was in the same mind as her husband, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when it came to ensuring national players were not overly pampered after wins.

As soon as she read that BAM president Datuk Nadzmi Salleh would be giving incentives to Hafiz, she said, she immediately called him and asked him not to go overboard.