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We can be first at 2017 Sea Games, says DPM

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HOST'S TARGET:
Develop athletes, says Muhyiddin

AHMAD FAIRUZ OTHMAN
SINGAPORE
news@nst.com.my

DEPUTY Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin wants Malaysia to set its sights on emerging as champions at the next Southeast Asian (Sea) Games, which it will host in 2017.

He said to do so, the Malaysian sporting fraternity must make early preparations for the development of its athletes in two years' time.

"Usually, when we become host,

our hope is that we emerge as the overall champion. I remember the time when I was involved (as youth and sports minister) and we had set our targets as high as possible.

"As a host, we know what it takes to have this kind of achievement. It can only be done if the athletes are developed starting now, together with the right training programmes and other assistance from sports associations and sponsors.

"The training programmes will be done locally and abroad. What is important is to increase our athletes' exposure at the international level."

Muhyiddin was here yesterday to watch the final rounds of the Women Masters Bowling, Rhythmic Gymnastics Individual, Badminton Women Singles quarter final, Archery Women Individual Com-



Deputy Prime Minister **Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin** and his wife, **Puan Sri Norainee Abdul Rahman**, with Malaysian SEA Games athletes at the Singapore Expo yesterday. Pic by Mohamad Shahril Badri Saali

ound and Pencak Silat Tanding Class D.

With him were his wife, Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman, and Malaysian chef de mission to the Sea Games, Datuk Seri Norza Zakaria.

Malaysia was champion in 2001 when it hosted the event, winning 111 gold, 98 silver and 86 bronze medals.

Malaysia breached its 50-gold medal mark yesterday when Uzair Amin Yusof and Naqib Eiman Shahrin won gold medals for the sailing men's under-19 420 class.

Muhyiddin said when it came to

hosting the Sea Games, Malaysia had to set a high standard and learn from the best practices of host cities, including Singapore.

"(Singapore) is good in planning, and taking care of the welfare of athletes and officers. We must learn these standards, so that our sports could be developed.

"These tasks will be left to the Youth and Sports Ministry and sports associations."

Muhyiddin congratulated the Malaysian contingent at the Singapore Sea Games for their excellent performance, which served as an in-

spiration for Malaysians.

He paid tribute to the work of the athletes, officers, National Sports Council and the ministry for their efforts here.

"The spirit shown by our athletes in Singapore has been excellent. I congratulate them on their achievement, as it is something that we can learn from when we host the games in two years' time," he said, while also congratulating Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin and sports associations in Malaysia for sweeping various events at the Sea Games.