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Olympic, Paralympic medallists get due reward

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KUALA LUMPUR: Members of the Malaysian contingents who did well at this year's Rio Olympics and Paralympics yesterday received their due reward from the Youth and Sports Ministry through the National Sports Council Incentive Scheme.

The medal winners, together with their coaches, were presented with cash rewards by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at an event here.

Paralympians Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli and Abdul Latif Romly were the night's biggest winners, pocketing RM1.05 million each following their gold medal feats last month.

Ziyad set a world record of 16.84m in the shot-put (F20) event, while Latif leapt a distance of 7.6m in the long jump event, also setting a new world record.

Sprinter Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi, who won gold in the men's 100m (T36) event, received RM1.02 million for setting a Games record time of 12.07 seconds.

Najib, in his speech, said the government would consider allocating more funds for sports in the 2017 Budget.

"Investing in sports gives big returns. It is not just about the achievement, but you (Olympic and Paralympic athletes) have lifted the spirit of the nation as well.

"That is the most important. You make us believe that we can succeed, and *Inshaallah*, we will invest more in sports."



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** handing a **mock cheque for RM1.02 million** to Paralympic gold medallist **Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi** at an event in **Kuala Lumpur** yesterday. With them are Youth and Sports Minister **Khairy Jamaluddin** (left) and the **nation's Olympic and Paralympic athletes**. Pic by Yazit Razali

He said the athletes had made Malaysians proud.

"Through your success, we can now stand taller."

Najib said he hoped that the athletes' success in Rio de Janeiro would serve as a stepping stone for the nation to achieve continuous success in sports.

"We don't want our sports performance to deteriorate, therefore,

concerted effort is needed to ensure our continued success."

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, in his speech, said: "These are our extraordinary individuals, who have made us believe in magic. I am no magician, but allow me to share with you these athletes, who have brought about a huge phenomenon in our beloved country over the past two months.

"With four silver medals and one bronze medal, it was our best outing at the Olympics, while our extraordinary athletes finally broke the duck and, for the first time, *Negaraku* was played on the international stage not once, but three times, at the Paralympics."

Badminton star Lee Chong Wei, men's doubles players Goh V Shem and Tan Wee Kiong, and mixed dou-

bles players Chan Peng Soon and Goh Liu Ying; divers Pandeleda Rinong and Cheong Jun Hoong; cyclist Azizulhasni Awang; and Paralympian Siti Noor Radiah Ismail were the other reward recipients.

The coaches who helped the athletes achieve their dreams also received incentives through the National Sports Council Coaching Incentive Scheme.