

PM launches key initiatives to grow sports sector

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PUTRAJAYA: With ambitions to grow the sports industry in Malaysia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob launched three key initiatives to increase women's participation in sports, discover new talents and generate economic growth for the country.

He said the Women in Sports Action Plan outlines the objectives, strategies and initiatives towards empowering the involvement of women in various sports so that the development of national sports is more inclusive and balanced.

"This action plan is in line with the National Sports Policy and Sports Development Act, as well as policies and legislation at the international level such as the Olympic Charter, Olympic Agenda 2020, Kazan Action Plan and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women."

The government has allocated RM10mil for the implementation of the Women in Sports Action Plan that contains five cores, eight objectives, 19 strategies and 45 initiatives, he said during the launch of the National Sports Day celebrations at the Youth and Sports Ministry yesterday.

The National Sports Day featured the theme "Towards Sporting Nation".

Ismail Sabri noted that a Women in Sports Action Plan committee had been set up to plan and monitor its implementation.

He said the committee would comprise 15 experts consisting of ministry representatives, sports bodies, former athletes and experienced individuals.

"The Women in Sports Action Plan is expected to increase the overall involvement of women in sports activities, leadership in sports bodies and participation in coaching and even as sports officials," he added.

Ismail Sabri also launched the Talent Identification and Development programme that was



Balance and legwork: Ismail Sabri showing some sepak raga bulatan skills after launching the National Sports Day celebrations in Putrajaya. Looking on is Ahmad Faizal. — AZMAN GHANI/The Star

developed through the cooperation between the Youth and Sports Ministry and Education Ministry.

He said the programme is expected to involve 500 trained teachers with a targeted participation of 60,000 primary school pupils.

"This programme is expected to broaden the participation of new talents from as young as seven years who have the potential and to reduce the risk of talents dropping out," he said.

In recognising the importance of sports as a contributor to the national economy, Ismail Sabri said the Youth and Sports Ministry had formulated a National Sports Industry Action Plan.

He said the comprehensive plan aims to make sports a new source in generating economic growth for the country, in line with developments globally, citing world economic data which showed that the global market value of sports reached nearly US\$388.3bil in 2020 and is expected to continue to grow to US\$599bil in 2025.

Data obtained from the

International Trade and Industry Ministry last year showed that 32.7 million Malaysians spent RM430mil for sports and leisure purposes.

"Overall, the Women in Sports Action Plan, Talent Identification and Development Programme and the National Sports Industry Action Plan are part of the sports planning and development direction which are being developed by the Youth and Sports Ministry through the National Sports Vision 2030," he added.

Ismail Sabri also said that 1,968 sports-related businesses ceased operations last year due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among the reasons were a lack of working capital and the inability to cover operation costs, he said.

Most of the businesses affected, he said, were promoters and sport event organisers, retail sporting goods businesses, fitness centres, as well as sports instructors.

He said the government had offered aid through measures such as the Prihatin Belia & Sukan initiative and by formulating the stand-

ard operating procedure for the sports and leisure sector in the National Recovery Plan to allow the activities to resume.

Meanwhile, Ismail Sabri also voiced his gratitude to the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics 2021 athletes.

"When the world was fighting against the Covid-19 pandemic, they trained hard so that they could carry the country's name.

"We have to recognise this effort in every athlete including those who did not bring home a medal," he said.

Also in attendance at the event were Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu, his deputy Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali and Public Service director-general Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman.

Watch the video
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