

Malaysia Beat Asian All-Stars En Route To Final
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 (Bernama) - Malaysia beat Thailand 3-1 to emerge Axiata Cup 2013 champions at Kuala Lumpur Badminton Stadium, Cheras here tonight.

At the same tournament last year, Malaysia only qualified for the semi-finals.

National singles chief coach Rashid Sidek said the presence of Datuk Lee Chong Wei encouraged the other players to play well and collect points.

"The mixed doubles pair served a pleasant surprise as the others are stronger than us. Liew Daren and Chong Wei Feng are inconsistent and Chong Wei's presence will inspire them at Sudirman Cup," he told reporters after the match.

National doubles coach Paulus Firman said the doubles players weakness was to send the shuttle upfront and not behind.

"Koo Kien Keat and Tan Boon Heong need to be more confident when facing the opponents," he said.

Malaysia got off to a poor start when Sonia Cheah lost to Ratchanok Intanon, 16-21 and 17-21 but drew level when Goh Liu Ying/Chan Peng Soon beat Sudket Prapakamol/Saralee Thongthongkam, 21-16 and 21-15 in the mixed doubles.

World number one player Chong Wei then gave Malaysia another point when he beat Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk, 21-12 and 21-18.

Victory was sealed when world number two pair, Kien Keat/Boon Heong beat Boonsak Ponsana/Songphon Anugritayawon, 21-10 and 21-17.

Earlier, in the third place playoff, Asian Selection beat Indonesia 3-1.

Asia got the first point when Tai Tzu Ying beat Lindaweni Fanetri, 21-18 and 22-20 and Lee Hyun Il beat Dionysius Hayom Rumbaka, 21-19, 16-21 and 21-6.

The men's doubles saw Bao Chun Lai/Zheng Bo beat Hendra Setiawan/Mohammad Ahsan, 21-12 when the match was stopped after Mohammad Ahsan was hurt.

Indonesia's single victory was via Muhammad Rijal/Debby Susanto who beat Ashwini Ponnappa/Tarun Kona, 16-21, 21-16, 21-15 in the mixed doubles.

The champions won US\$400,000 (RM1.24 million) while the runners-up received US\$200,000 (RM620,000).

The third and fourth placed teams received US\$150,000 (RM465,000) and US\$100,000 (RM310,000) respectively.

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