

## **PM Outlines Four Reasons for Holding SUKMA**

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KANGAR, June 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak said the government has four main objectives in holding the Malaysia Games (SUKMA).

He said the first objective was to highlight new talents as secondliners in carrying Malaysia's challenge at the international meets, and if there were no secondliners, the quality of sports would deteriorate.

"In the Thomas Cup recently, Malaysia almost won but lost and have to wait four more years after waiting since 1992.

"If there were credible secondliners like Datuk Lee Chong Wei, we would surely have won," said the Prime Minister in his speech at the closing of the 17th SUKMA at Stadium Tuanku Syed Putra, here Wednesday night.

He said SUKMA was an example how all types of sports must be developed so that the quality of national sports would improve besides nurturing, building the physical, mental and emotional resilience so that the athletes would be more successful at the international level.

The second reason was to give development opportunities for sports facilities and infrastructure required for success in these fields, said Najib.

"Who could imagine that Perlis would have a stadium, swimming pool and badminton hall. This is due to Perlis hosting (the SUKMA) and assistance from the federal government in providing these facilities. I hope Perlis will look after these facilities in the best manner," he said.

The Prime Minister said the third objective was to inculcate a healthy lifestyle because according to the criteria, the obesity rate in Malaysia was the highest in Southeast Asia.

He said Malaysia should not be in this category but because of less activity in sports and recreation, many Malaysians had become obese.

"We want to emphasise that the people can keep a healthy body to raise productivity

and subsequently reduce expenses on health and thus enjoy a more meaningful and quality life," he added.

Najib said the fourth reason why the SUKMA was organised was because sports could also be used as a tool to strengthen unity and national integration.

The Prime Minister, who himself is an ardent sports fan, congratulated Perlis for a job well done and for winning 12 gold medals, the highest by the state in the history of its participation in the SUKMA.

"When we decide the host for the 17th SUKMA, there were some who were skeptical about Perlis' organising capabilities but when the SUKMA ended today, it was evident that Perlis had successfully hosted the event.

"I wish to congratulate Perlis for carrying out its responsibilities as the host with enthusiasm because it is the biggest sporting event hosted by the state," said Najib.

Earlier, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azlan Man in his speech also thanked the organising committee for creating their own history by hosting the biggest sporting event in the history of the state, successfully.

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