

**Make Sports As A Culture – Najib
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SHAH ALAM, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysians must make sports as a culture and not only indulge in the activity on the day of celebration, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said if sports were made as a culture and life style, the country would be able to churn out great champions in the eyes of the world.

"Today, we have number one players in badminton and squash but who will succeed them after (Datuk) Lee Chong Wei and (Datuk) Nicol David...this is the question.

"If we are active, (the question on) sports culture will be answered by itself because hundreds of young people will come forward to participate at the top level in the world," he said when officiating the National Sports Day which was attended by about 20,000 people at the parade ground of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), here Saturday.

Also present were his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, Chairman of the Selangor Federal Action Committee Datuk Seri Noh Omar and UiTM Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Professor Dr Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar.

The Prime Minister said currently, Malaysia was stil not capable of becoming a world champion in sports although it had hosted international sports competitions such as the SEA Games and the Commonwealth Games.

"In terms of organising, certainly Malaysia cannot be challenged, number one, but in terms of the results of the competitions, Malaysia's success in the medal tally has yet to reach the level of a sporting nation.

"Australia for example, has a population of 30 million, about the same as Malaysia which has a population of about 30 million, but in terms of sports domination, they are bigger and higher because basically, they have the sports culture," he said.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister said making sports as a culture would reduce the number of Malaysians suffering from pressure and having excessive body weight.

"Many will also have the opportunity to seek jobs in the field of sports such as trainers, coaches and sports medicine. This is my aspiration," he said.

The National Sports Day has been declared on the second Saturday of October each year by the Prime Minister on March 24.

The celebration is an initiative of the Youth and Sports Ministry which was a proactive

move in the process of transformation to achieve the aspiration to turn Malaysia as a Sporting Nation.

More than 17,000 sports and recreational activities had been drawn up for the National Sports Day to ensure every strata of society took part in the celebration which was being celebrated simultaneously throughout the country.

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