

Clinch top 10 position, Mahathir advises Asian Games contingent

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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today handed the *Jalur Gemilang* Malaysian flag to the Indonesia-bound Malaysian Asian Games contingent with the advice to emerge in the top 10 among the 45 competing nations.

"I am confident this contingent is very capable of a more meaningful achievement, God willing," the Prime Minister said at the ceremony, recalling that Malaysia had clinched the 10th position at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

The 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia are scheduled to be held in Jakarta and Palembang from Aug 18 to Sept 2.

"If Malaysia was able to be among the top 10 in a previous edition of the meet, I don't see why our team cannot repeat the success in 2018, or do even better," he said in a brief speech at the ceremony at Dataran Perdana here.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had world-class athletes in its contingent, such as Al Jufferi Jamari (silat), Azizulhasni Awang (cycling), Wong Weng Soon (wushu) and the women's bowling squad and the men's hockey team.

"I am also confident that the selected athletes are the best and are capable of bringing glory to the country," he said of the 418-member contingent.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman and several other Cabinet ministers also attended the ceremony.

The Prime Minister advised the athletes to prove that Malaysians could be the best athletes in their respective sport and that they were competing to seek glory not for themselves but for the country.

“I trust that all of you carry the responsibility for our beloved country and will give of your best for the sake of one’s pride and that of the contingent.

“Competing (in the Asian Games) is not just for the rewards and incentives alone, but to have the *Jalur Gemilang* fly high in the eyes of the world, to place the nation’s prestige on the world arena,” he said.

Dr Mahathir said the athletes should emulate the sporting spirit of national badminton ace Datuk Lee Chong Wei and see him as a catalyst to return with excellence.

“Even if he (Chong Wei) cannot be with you in this edition of the games, it is hoped that his fighting spirit will serve as a catalyst for the contingent to come back home with a better success,” he said, adding that he hoped that Chong Wei would get well soon.

The men’s singles ace has had to withdraw from the Asian Games to seek treatment for an ailment.

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