Gold mine for student athletes

BY HUSSIN ABDUL RAHMAN

KUCHING: It pays to be a top sportsman or woman when a student enters one of the local universities as the government is providing more scholarships for them.

In fact, said Assistant Minister of Sports and Assistant Minister of Communication Datuk Lee Kim Shin, the Ministry Of Higher Education should provide more scholarships for students who excel in sports if the country wants to produce more ‘thinking sportsmen and women’.

Lee said this when he officiated at the opening of the first phase of the 2012 Malaysian Universities Games (MASUM) at the UNIMAS mini stadium in Kota Samarahan on Monday night.

“The government should give more scholarships to students who excel in the high performance sports if we want to win gold medals at the Olympics,” said Lee to loud cheers from the contingents of 20 public universities gathered at the stadium.

About 1,600 athletes are competing in badminton, chess, futsal, archery, swimming, squash, tennis and ten-pin bowling which started yesterday and ends on Sunday.

Lee said efforts to produce top athletes among university students are showing good results as 30 percent of the gold medal winners at the last SEA Games in Palembang and Jakarta are university students.

The Higher Education Ministry has allocated RM10 million for scholarships this year for students who excel in sports and so far 800 of them are enjoying the benefits.

Another 200 of these student athletes, who must maintain a CGPA average of 2.0 (for those representing the country) and 2.5 for athletes representing states will get the scholarships this year.

Meanwhile, Malaysia has gained international recognition for its efforts in producing top student athletes as well as in organising student games because the country will organise the world student woodball championships next year.

“Universiti Malaysia Sabah will also host the Asean Universities taekwondo championships in August,” said MASUM chairman Prof Madya Datuk Dr Haji Kasim Hj Md Mansur, who is also the president of Asean Universities Games.

WELCOME TO KUCHING: Datuk Lee Kim Shin spends time with the team from Universiti Malaysia Pahang.
MOVING FORWARD: Datuk Lee Kim Shin with athletes and officials from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Beside Lee are (from left) MASUM chairman and Asean University Games (AUG) president Dr Haj Kasim Hj Moe Mansar and UNIMAS Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Khairuddin Abd Hamid. On the right is Secretary of the Sports Division at the Ministry of Higher Education, Dr Saharudin Ismail. PHOTOS: HUSSIN ABDUL RAHMAN

BRIGHT START: A fireworks display signals the start of the 2012 Malaysian University Games at Stadium UNIMAS in Kota Samarahan on Monday night.