Lee asks for more scholarships for athletes, suggests Unimas run sports medicine courses

KUCHING: The Higher Education Ministry needs to consider increasing the number of scholarships for sportsmen as an encouragement for them to excel in sports.

Assistant Sports Minister Datuk Lee Kim Shin said this was necessary especially for high performing athletes who would be pursuing tertiary education.

Previously, he said, the ministry had given out 168 scholarships to sportsmen to pursue their tertiary education, and the number of scholarship had increased to 200 this year.

"However, this may not be enough and we need more scholarships to encourage our athletes to excel and make them world beating athletes and also intellectual at the same time," he said when officiating at Phase One of the Malaysian Universities Sports Council (Masum) Sports Carnival at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) here on Monday evening.

Lee said in the South-East Asian (SEA) Games in Jakarta last year, 22% of the athletes who represented the country comprised undergraduates from local public universities.

"Fifty one percent of the gold medalists were undergraduates and this is something that we can be proud of," he added.

He suggested that Unimas introduce sports medicine courses as part of the sub-discipline under its medical faculty.

"For our country to have a pool of world beating athletes, we need a more professional programme to develop the sports.

"We may need psychologists, nutritionists and sports strategists to help make our country a world sports super powerhouse," he said.

He said the Government had been emphasising sports and recreational activities in local public universities in order to create dedicated athletes who could excel internationally.

Earlier, Unimas vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid said the Masum Sports Carnival would be a platform to create world class athletes.

"Unimas is an institution that emphasises sports and recreational activities and has been encouraging its undergraduates to take part in various extra-curricular activities," he said.

He said the experience gained through the activities could help develop them to be a confident all-rounder individual.

The carnival is on until April 15 and is participated by 1,600 athletes from 20 local public universities.
Fifty one percent of the gold medallists were undergraduates and this is something that we can be proud of.

— DATUK LEE KIM SHIN

All in the name of sport: Lee exchanging greetings with athletes during the Masum Sports Carnival at the Unimas Mini Stadium on Monday. — ANDRE OLIVEIRO / The Star