

Sports school: Ministry has not given up hope

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By Irwaty Mellisa

KOTA KINABALU: The Youth and Sports Ministry has not given up hope that a sports school would be built in Sabah despite the Education Ministry reportedly putting on hold its plan to construct the facility here early next year.

Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun said he would wait until he gets an official letter on the current situation from the Ministry of Education.

"At the moment I have not received any confirmation on whether we will be getting the much talked about sports school," he said, adding it would, therefore, be unfair to make any comment for now. He added that he had not spoken to the Ministry about the matter. "I myself only got to know about it through the newspaper."

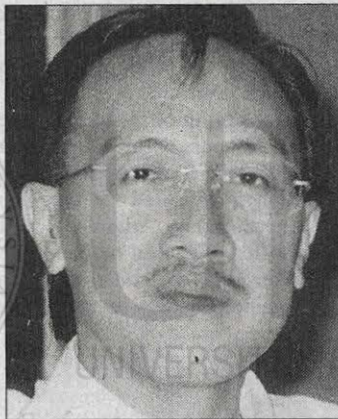
Early in August, Masidi announced that work on the school, costing RM80 million, would start early next year.

At present, there are already two sports schools in the country, namely the Bukit Jalil Sports School and Bandar Penawar Sports School, Johor.

It was reported in the national media that Pahang and Perlis would be getting the third and fourth sports schools by next year.

"I will wait for the official decision from the Ministry before making any further comments," said Masidi.

"I am sure that any decision on the sports school would be in the best interest of the State," he added.



Masidi

"I am a positive person and I take things positively...I strongly believe Sabah would be getting the sports school," he said, adding, "for now what is important is to get the official letter."

He was commenting on the report which quoted the Education Ministry's Physical Education and Sports Department Director of Policy and Sports Development, Jalaludin Othman, as stating that several problems cropped up with regards to Sabah's sports school location, thus putting the plans to build the facility in the State on hold.

"It was announced in the Ninth Malaysia plan that a budget has been allocated for two new schools, but later it was agreed that three sports schools were needed," said Jalaludin.

The sites offered in Sabah were not suitable, as they were too close to the sea and too deep inside.

We would prefer a site near Likas, for example, as it is close to facilities and more feasible, he added.

The two sites offered by Sabah were the campuses of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (Uitm).

"All these have forced us to put plans for the Sabah sports school on hold even though a school is very much needed there.

"There is talent in both Sabah and Sarawak and it will be under the jurisdiction of the Education Ministry to organise funds for the Sabah school as the budget was indeed only for two schools. It is still being worked out."