

# Higher Learning Institutions play vital role to produce athletes of high calibre – Tawfiq

BP 20.8.2014 20

**KOTA KINABALU:** Higher Learning Institutions (HLPs) have a role to produce athletes that could compete at the highest level for the country.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Tawfiq Abu Bakar Titingan said academic intelligence could be useful for athletes to achieve excellence.

"Nowadays, athletes need to be intelligent and not only bank on their technical and tactical skills.

"That is why we need IPT to produce such athletes whom the country can count on at the international stage," he

said when opening the Sukan Mahasiswa Borneo (Sukmab) III at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) yesterday.

According to him, athletes such as Pendalela Renong of Sarawak is an IPT student that has gone on to excel at world class competition including winning a bronze at the 2012 London Olympics.

Tawfiq said that the good achievements by IPT students at international sporting event have made the country proud and proved the public perception that athletes are on the wane when they enter IPT.

On the Sukmab III, Tawfiq

said it was one ideal avenue where participants of different backgrounds meet, thus enhancing unity between the participating countries.

Meanwhile, UMS vice chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Harun Abdullah said Sukmab was an effort to provide an equal opportunity for IPT students in Borneo to compete in multi-sport events.

The biennial event involved participations from all the IPTs in Borneo.

UMS hosted the inaugural edition in 2009 followed by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) two years later before

UMS became the host for the second time.

Sukmab which started yesterday runs until August 22 where more than 1,000 athletes and officials from 27 contingents, including three from Brunei, namely Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Universiti Islam Sultan Sarif Ali and Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Bagwan and one from Indonesia, Universitas Tanjung Pura of Kalimantan, are taking part.

Seven sports will be contested, namely futsal, beach volleyball, sepak takraw, volleyball, table tennis, petanque and chess.



**SUKMAB BEGINS ...** Tawfiq (centre) officially opens the Sukan Mahasiswa Borneo III at UMS yesterday.