



**Eye on the ball:** OKU participants matching skills in the three-on-three wheelchair basketball event and a disabled badminton player (right) preparing to smash at UPM Serdang. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

# Healthy adrenaline rush for all



NO one was left out of National Sports Day. While many ran and swam, the disabled and even those behind bars were not forgotten.

At Universiti Putra Malaysia's Sports Complex, three-on-three wheelchair basketball matches were held, while other disabled athletes took part in badminton, aerobics and other events.

"It's important to have integration programmes with the disabled community. We really want National Sports Day to be in line with our 'Sports For All' philosophy," said Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, who gamely took part in a three-on-three wheelchair basketball match.

Khairy also visited an exhibition on the para athletes' training modules, trying his hand at fencing and bench presses.

"Today's programme approach is a little different, by having both disabled and able-bodied participants, so the latter can see what the disabled community faces in sports," Khairy said.

Malaysian Paralympic Council patron Tun Jene Abdullah said the minister had helped greatly in assisting Malaysian para athletes.

"More importantly, this move has helped our athletes realise that they are worthy," Jene said.

In Kajang, it was a scene out of a movie with prison inmates and staff alike playing football, sepak takraw and doing aerobics.

National Sports Day at the Kajang Prison Complex was marked with sweat, laughter and a communal air of bonding.

On Friday, about 500 inmates of both the male and female prisons took part in

various activities, including tug of war, lawn bowl, sepak raga bulat, arm wrestling and even batu seremban and a body-building showcase.

Some inmates put on a show during the aerobics session, doing back-flips and somersaults to the glee of their cellmates.

Prison employees joined a morning-long fitness programme within the prison complex that included cycling, a 1,000-step walk, petanque and netball – a family affair that saw 700 officers, inspectors and administrative staff and their families get together to get fit.

Trainee S. Thivagaren, 23, said the events of the day were a nice change from the usual regime.

"We get up in the morning and exercise, running, doing push-ups, that sort of thing.

"This is more fun, there's music and teamwork, so it's a good way to relieve stress."

And there was stress on the future. At the Mesra Mall in Kemaman, Terengganu, the search was on for a future Nicol David as scores of young children turned up to try their hand at squash.

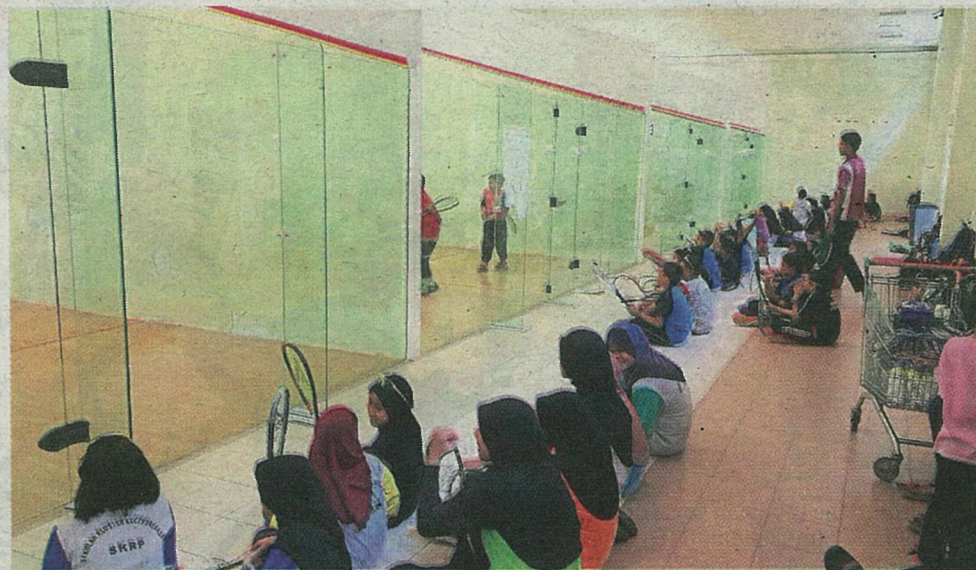
Some 60 children picking up a squash racquet for the first time were shown the finer points of the game by former national star Mohd Azlan Iskandar.

"It was ideal to have the clinic in Kemaman because it is also World Squash Day and there are already events in urban areas like Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

"The whole idea is to introduce squash to the rural kids and let them feel that squash is a sport that they can actually pick up."



**Show of might:** Kajang Prison inmates huffing and puffing in the tug of war event.



**Nicol David wannabes:** Children from Kemaman attending a squash clinic conducted by the Azlan Iskandar Squash Academy in conjunction with National Sports Day.