

A flight into the future

THE flight to London last night was packed with hopeful Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) officials praying for Malaysia to beat Britain as well as praying for votes.

MHC have sponsored a delegation of no fewer than 12 state officials, to watch Malaysia play Britain in the final Olympic Qualifier at the Lee Valley Stadium in London this weekend.

The two back-to-back matches promise the winner a ticket to the Tokyo Olympics, while the loser will have to wait another four years.

Since MHC will be holding their elections on Nov 16, and nominations close on Nov 2, all the states have handed in their "hope" list (candidates for the elections) to the MHC before flying off to London.

In a twist of events, MHC president Datuk Seri Subahan Kamal and women's deputy president Datuk S. Shamala issued a joint statement on Oct 29, saying that they will seek re-election for another term.

However, this decision came as a surprise to many as both had said many times that they will not seek re-election if Malaysia fail to beat Britain and qualify for the Olympics after a 20-year absence.

Shamala clarified their earlier stand on a FB posting amid much criticism on social media.

"Elections are always a very phenomenal experience to endure — slandering on social media, name calling, creation of Gurus of all natures declaring who is good and who is bad and the list goes on.

"Anyway, resilience is exactly what one needs to tolerate atrocities and never ever to go down to these unimaginably low levels.

"We must at all times maintain our dignity and respect for others. It wouldn't take two seconds to do the same but we aren't of that class.

"Thank God, we don't have to feel great by calling people names, associate humans to animals, self claim we are angels and some other things which I honestly find it degrading as a human to even mention.

"So, let's maintain our dignity and do the hardest but the best thing - embrace silence and focus on the work (at hand)," said Shamala in her FB posting.

There are two camps who hope their candidates will be voted in, but early indications are that Subahan, as well as Shamala, are a shoo-in for another term as they have the lion's share of the nominations.

Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah from Pahang is the choice for the men's deputy president's post.

However, Johor HA have nominated AirAsia Group Bhd executive chairman Datuk Kamarudin Meranun for the president's post while Kuala Lumpur HA have nominated Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim for the top job.

Nominations will close at 3pm, tomorrow, hours before the Malaysian team play their first match against Britain. And there could be some nominated candidates withdrawing their names, and some positions won



Datuk S. Shamala

without contest.

The flight to London, which is as well as campaigning while supporting the Malaysian team at Lee Valley, could chart the future of Malaysian hockey, on and off the artificial pitch.

For the record, MHC did sponsor state affiliates to watch the Dublin and Antwerp Olympic Qualifiers, as well as the Hague World Cup. So the paid trip to Lee Valley is not unusual. **Jugjet Singh**