

Kudos to our sporting heroes

I REFER to your front-page report “National icons” and “Khairy: Coaches get extra incentives, too” (Sept 23).

A rousing welcome was accorded to our national icons by more than 1,000 fans at KLIA Bunga Raya VIP Complex in the presence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife, Tun Jeanne Abdullah, who is the patron of the Paralympics Council of Malaysia, and other dignitaries as well as elated fans along the victory parade route in Kuala Lumpur.

It will go down in the Malaysian sporting journal that history was created when our athletes won three gold and a bronze, compared with the London 2012 Paralympics when Malaysia won only a silver and a bronze.

Our able-bodied Olympians also fared well by winning four silver and

a bronze at the Rio 2016 Olympics.

We are proud that our government has handsomely rewarded each of our three Paralympics gold medalists — Abdul Latif Romly in the long jump T20 (intellectual disability) event, Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli in the shot-put F20 (intellectual disability) event and Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi in the 100m T36 (cerebral palsy) event — with RM1 million and a monthly pension of RM5,000 for life. Naza Corporation Holdings is rewarding each with a Kia Sportage and a residential suite unit at Trion 888, Equine Park.

Siti Noor Radiah Ismail who won a bronze medal in the women’s long jump T20 (intellectual disability) will get an additional RM100,000 on top of RM100,000 and a RM2,000 monthly pension.

The coaches will get a 10 per cent increase in incentives. They have been receiving a sum equivalent to 20 per cent of the incentives received by athletes. R. Jeganathan, for example, receives RM300,000.

This is the first time in Malaysian sporting history that coaches are being rewarded and recognised in such a big way for their dedication in producing champions on the world stage.

Credit should also go to the parents, teachers of special schools and the Paralympic coaches.

This outstanding win will open the floodgates to search for talent at the school, district and state levels

for the national Paralympic team.

Once again, congratulations to our Paralympic team for putting Malaysia’s name among the top sporting nations. We were in the 36th place among the 163 competing nations.

We look forward to our Paralympians surpassing the current achievements in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, which is closer to home for Malaysians to travel to root for our national icons.

C. SATHASIVAM SITHERAVELLU,
Seremban



(Clockwise, from bottom left) Abdul Latif Romly, Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi, Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli and Siti Noor Radiah Ismail feted by fans during an open-top bus parade in Kuala Lumpur.