

Boycott Games, PM urges other nations

EST 24 JUL 1986

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on other members of the Commonwealth to join in the boycott of the Commonwealth Games scheduled to begin in Edinburgh tomorrow.

"It would not look good if people think that colour affects our thinking in the Commonwealth," the Prime Minister said in a reply to his Canadian counterpart, Mr Brian Mulroney, who has sent messages to all the Commonwealth leaders seeking their countries' full participation in the Games.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's reply was sent by Wisma Putra through the Canadian High Commission yesterday.

Majority

He told his counterpart that Malaysia's decision to boycott the Games and the arts festival was taken in view of the unyielding stand by Mrs Margaret Thatcher's Government on the imposition of economic sanctions against the South African regime.

"Malaysia's boycott is in solidarity with the other Commonwealth members," he said. So far, 30 member countries had decided to boycott the games, the 13th in the series.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said despite the obvious desire of almost all Commonwealth countries to apply sanctions, "I cannot understand how Britain alone can insist on having her way".

He added that he did not subscribe to the idea of the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group (EPG) as he was not present when the decision to send the group on a six-month mission to the South African region was made during a weekend retreat of the Commonwealth summit in Bahamas last year.

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That decision represented a partial victory for Mrs Thatcher who opposed economic sanctions.

During the conference, Commonwealth leaders had argued that comprehensive economic sanctions, with British participation, were the only way of pushing South Africa towards majority rule.

"My stand was made clear in a letter to other heads of Government in Bahamas. I am not at all surprised over the failure of the group or their subsequent recommendations," he said.

The EPG's report on its six-month mission in the South African region will be discussed by seven Commonwealth leaders at a meeting in London early next month.

The 116-page report of the mission, co-chaired by Australia's former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and retired Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, was officially released last month.