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MAHATHIR-SQUASH

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KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 2 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERIDR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT OPENED THE US\$85,000 (M\$230,000) SINGER WORLD OPEN SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP HERE WITH THE HOPE THAT MALAYSIA WILL HOST MORE WORLD-LEVEL OR INTERNATIONAL SPORTS MEETS.

DATUK SERIDR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS SUPPORTIVE OF ALL SPORTS AND ENCOURAGED LOCAL SPORTS ORGANISATIONS TO BID FOR WORLD OR INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LOOK INTO MORE SUPPORT FOR SPORTS GENERALLY AND WOULD MAKE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS HELD HERE MORE ATTRACTIVE TO PARTICIPANTS FROM ABROAD AND LOCALLY,

COMPETITIVE SPORTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL ALSO HELPED FOSTER FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND COUNTRIES, HE ADDED.

+EVEN COUNTRIES AT WAR ARE KNOWN TO FORGET THEIR ENMITY DURING SPORTS. SPORTSMEN MAY NOT BE CONSCIOUSLY WORKING AT IT BUT THEY DO CONTRIBUTE A FAIR AMOUNT TOWARDS WORLD PEACE,+ HE SAID DURING A DINNER AT THE PAN PACIFIC HOTEL HERE TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE TOURNAMENT. -- MORE

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+ONE MUST NOT FORGET THAT IT WAS A GAME OF PING-PONG WHICH ENDED SOME 25 YEARS OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA,+ HE SAID.

BY STAGING SUCH WORLD CLASS COMPETITION HERE, IT WOULD ALSO MAKE MALAYSIA BETTER KNOWN IN THE SPORTS WORLD WHERE THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS WAS HUGE AND INCREASING ALL THE TIME, HE SAID.

ALL THE WORLD'S TOP SQUASH PLAYERS INCLUDING NUMBER ONE JAHANGIR KHAN AND HIS COMPATRIOT JANSHER KHAN WILL BE TAKING PART IN THE TOURNAMENT, THE WORLD'S RICHEST SQUASH MEET.

THE TOURNAMENT PROPER BEGINS TOMORROW AND ENDS ON OCT 7.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO INSPECTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GLASS SQUASH COURT AT THE DEUAN MERDEKA AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE TO BE USED FROM THE QUARTER-FINAL STAGE ONWARDS, -- BERNAMA

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