

# Dr M: We'll work with Slav c'wealth

By AHIRUDIN ATTAN

MALAYSIA, will extend its cooperation to the independent republics of the former Soviet Union. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this is more important than extending recognition to them.

"We will cooperate with them but whether or not Malaysia gives its recognition to the republics is not important now," he said when asked to comment on the reported dissolution of the Soviet Union and whether the Government will extend its recognition to the new Slav commonwealth which has declared the Soviet Union dead.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir spoke to reporters in Kuala Lumpur after flagging off the Commonwealth Games

Run, which signals Malaysia's bid to host the Games in 1998. Some 10,000 people registered for the run while a fund started yesterday to support the country's bid succeeded in raking in \$1.3 million.

On bilateral ties with Australia, he said Malaysia will continue to maintain good relations.

"Australia wants to keep the good ties, particularly in trade, and so does Malaysia. The views of the Australian Press do not represent the views of the Australian Government. They are like that so there's no point in labouring over this issue," he added.

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The Prime Minister had earlier met with visiting Australian Minister of Industry, Technology and Communications, Senator John Button, in Kuala Lumpur.

In his address, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is confident of staging a successful and enjoyable Commonwealth Games because it has the support of the people.

Over the next three months, the Government will gather signatures from hundreds of thousands of Malaysians from all over the country, together with their contributions, to show support for the country's bid to stage the Games.

"Malaysia is a nation of sports lovers like all the other Commonwealth nations. Despite the fact that we have not excelled in sports other than certain games, our love for sports still gives us the enthusiasm to arrange a number of sporting events at the international level and in this respect, we can justly say we have acquired a degree of expertise," he said.

In the next few years, the

Prime Minister said, Malaysia will be hosting the Thomas Cup badminton championship, the World Corporate Games, the World Cup Golf and the World Cup Junior Football.

"You might like to ask why Malaysia is so keen to host the 1988 Commonwealth Games. We believe there are many areas which can be used to strengthen ties among Commonwealth countries. We also believe there are many areas in which countries can help one another.

"Sports is one area where we can definitely increase and strengthen ties among the Commonwealth countries. Sports is very much a people-to-people thing and through sports, the people in the world can get to know one another and create and strengthen the sort of friendly ties that the Commonwealth wants to promote."

Chairman of the Commonwealth Games Mr O. De Sales and sports leaders from the Commonwealth witnessed the flagging off of the run and the launching of the fund.