

M'sia to ¹² make a bid to host 2008 ³⁻²¹⁻⁹⁻⁹⁸ Olympics

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will register its interest to host the 2008 Olympics, although "I doubt whether we can succeed," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"But we will make a bid anyway, although it is just to register our willingness to make a bid," the Prime Minister said when asked whether Malaysia was serious about its intentions.

Dr Mahathir said certain preconditions must be met in order to play host to the Olympics.

"We need to have a fairly good number of athletes. We can't just be a host with no participation. And that is a little bit more difficult to produce than building stadiums," he added.

International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch had indicated last week that a host **country** also needed to have a fairly **sizeable** number of world-class athletes.

Sydney will host the 2000 Olympics while Athens will host the 2004 Olympics.

On **KL '98**, Dr Mahathir said he was very happy with the progress of the Games.

He said from the feedback received, some people expressed regret that the Games were ending today.

He also heaped praises on the Malaysian team and said they had done "exceptionally **well**."

"I did not expect them to win that many medals, especially golds.

"I was rather pessimistic. I thought we would have enough problem playing host and we won't be able to win any medals.

"But as you can see they have done very well," he said.

Dr Mahathir said because of the impressive performance he was seriously thinking of declaring a public holiday.