

PM to open sports complex¹⁸

By S.T. ARASU

PETALING JAYA: What started out as a mere idea in 1984 is now a reality. The RM12bil National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil will be officially opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight.

Fourteen years ago the Sports Ministry, then headed by Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud, acquired an 80ha piece of land from the Bukit Jalil Estate.

Since then, four ministers have had a say in the development of the complex. Datuk Seri Najih Tun Razak, Datuk Annuar Musa, Datuk Ghani Othman and finally Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The complex, which includes the Games Village, is still undergoing some final touches.

It boasts of state-of-the-art facilities and will play host to the Commonwealth Games from Sept 11 to 21.

Also being launched by Dr Mahathir in conjunction with the opening of the complex is the Sistem Transit Aliran Ringan's (Slat) Light Rail Transit (LRT) System I, Phase I and II Network at the RM23mil Bukit Jalil LRT station.

With this, the objective of providing fast, comfortable, reliable and efficient public transporta-

tion for city residents with most parts of the Klang Valley linked to the Games complex has been accomplished.

The five stadiums situated within the complex will also be used for the pre-Commonwealth Games starting today.

The Sports Ministry has also lined up various activities for the public starting at 9am today. They are *Larian Ria* (Fun Run), football skills competition, five-a-side football, hot air balloon rides, wall climbing, *gasing* (top) competition, kite flying, go-kart, inline skating and beach volleyball.

For the opening ceremony there will be colourful pyrotechnic and laser shows to mark the latest Malaysian sports milestone.

Top local artistes such as Amy, Ella, Erra Fazira, Raihan, M. Nasir, Innocence Indigo, Annuar Zain, Kate Subrano, Arni, Noraniza Idris, REM, Feminin, Kool, Fish, Candy and OAG will also perform at the ceremony.

An estimated 66,000 people are expected to witness the event.

Dr Mahathir will light the cauldron in the stadium to mark the opening of the complex.

He is also expected to give the official names to the three main stadiums

in the complex.

The main complex is expected to be called the National Stadium, the indoor stadium to be named Putra Stadium and the swimming stadium the National Aquatic Centre.

Ella is scheduled to team up with Subrano and render the official song of the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games, *Standing in the Eyes of the World*, written by famed American singer and songwriter David Gates.

Gates was formerly lead singer of the now defunct Bread, one of the world's most popular bands in the 1960s and 70s.

Some of band's most popular hits, written by Gates, which still has air play on radio stations are *Aubrey*, *Guitar Man* and *It Don't Matter to Me*.

Standing in the Eyes of the World will also be sung in Bahasa Malaysia.

Veteran local composer Wah Idris, music producer Fauzi Marzuki and lyricist Habsah Hassan have put together the Bahasa Malaysia version.

With all the free passes for the opening ceremony snapped up, a carnival atmosphere can be expected at the sports complex.

■ In your Sunday Star: An infographic on the Games Village

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