

Team up now

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has told the parties involved in organising the Commonwealth Games to stop arguing among themselves and work together instead.

He said time did not permit anyone to defend one's "territory" when the events were to be held from Sept 11 to 21.

"There is no need for anyone to protect his own empire. The only empire we have is the country, whose dignity must be protected by all who are involved in the Commonwealth Games," he said, adding that preparations for the Games, although satisfactory, were rife with problems.

"Sometimes, it is as if there are two captains on one ship steering in different directions. During the preparation stage, this problem is not really worrying.

"But when the actual Games begin, cooperation among all parties is very important. If there are differences in opinion, settle them through negotiations instead of making it public," he said when opening the National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil last night.

Problems during the preparation included ticket sales, publicity, merchandising, sponsorship and even vandalism at the complex.

Dr Mahathir, however, said he was confident Malaysians could manage the Games successfully. "*Malaysia boleh* if we believe we can do it," he stressed.

Stop squabbling and start working together, parties to KL Games told

With the opening of the complex, the Prime Minister also announced the names for the facilities.

Stadium Nasional is the new name for the main stadium, Stadium Putra the indoor stadium, Pusat Akuatik Nasional the swimming complex, Stadium Hoki Nasional and Pusat Skuasy Nasional (squash complex). These facilities are within the Bukit Jalil National Sports Complex.

For the two facilities at the Bukit Kiara Sports Complex, the indoor stadium is named Stadium Juara and the lawn bowl greens will be known as Pusat Boling Padang Nasional.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should feel relieved that the decision to build the complex was made before the economic downturn.

"If we want to build the complex now, surely the costs will be more - even to the extent that we cannot afford to build it," he said.

Although Malaysia was suffering from the depreciation of the ringgit and the decline of its share market, Dr Mahathir said it could not be denied that Malaysians were enjoying a better standard of living than before.

He said investments in the development of sports would not be futile because sports

would generate great returns in the country's progress.

"Whether we like it or not, sport has become an industry which will contribute to the economic development of the nation," he said, adding that the complex would not have been built if there was no potential of getting returns.

Earlier, when launching the STAR-LRT system at the Sukan Negara Station in Bukit Jalil, the Prime Minister said the project's early completion showed that Malaysian companies were capable of handling big projects.

He said it also proved that local companies were efficient, credible and could be trusted by the Government and the people in implementing big projects.

Dr Mahathir said Kuala Lumpur should have only one light rail transit system, but as local investors lacked the capital and experience the Government had to allow four companies to handle four different systems.

He hoped there would be integration among the four so that commuters would not face problems.