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Games-Bukit Jalil (Special Report)

BUKIT JALIL OPENS NEW ERA IN SPORTING EXCELLENCE

By: Ali Mamat

KUALA LUMPUR, July 11 (Bernama) -- The opening of the National Sports Complexes in Bukit Jalil and the simultaneous naming of its five key facilities by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today marks yet another milestone in Malaysia's efforts in striving for sporting excellence and development.

The five key components, located on a 120-hectare site, are the Main Stadium, Indoor Stadium, Swimming Complex, Squash Stadium and Hockey Stadium.

They are among the venues for the 15 sports to be contested in the 16th Commonwealth Games from Sept 11-21.

In conjunction with the opening, Dr Mahathir will also name two other Games venues -- the Netball Stadium and Lawn Bowls Complex, both in the Bukit Kiara Sports Complex which is situated about 20km from the National Sports Complex.

Before opening the complex, Dr Mahathir will launch the Light Rail Transit (LRT) System 1 at the Bukit Jalil station. The RM23 million station links Bukit Jalil with the LRT station in Jalan Sultan Ismail, about 12km away.

Dr Mahathir boarded the LRT at the Jalan Sultan Ismail station for a 24-minute ride to Bukit Jalil.

Apart from providing public transportation in the city, the service is also part of the support services carrying passengers from the station to Bukit Jalil, particularly during the duration of the Kuala Lumpur '98.

The National Sports Complex will be officially opened in a grand ceremony which will take place at the Main Stadium, an athletics and football stadium which is considered to be ultra-modern with a capacity of 100,000 spectators, covered by a round roof shaped like a ring and equipped with multi-coloured seats representing the colours of the national flag "Jalur Gemilang."

Based on the latest figures from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the revised cost for the construction of the Main Stadium, Indoor Stadium and the Swimming Complex is RM800 million.

The Indoor Stadium has 16,000 seats. It can accommodate more spectators than the actual number of seats in the stadium as 3,000 of the seats can be dismantled.

Apart from being the venue for several sporting events, including gymnastic for Kuala Lumpur '98, the stadium which is equipped with a four-sided scoreboard can also be used for exhibitions or stage shows.

The fully-covered Swimming Complex has 4,000 seats, incorporating a 10-lane swimming pool of Olympic standard, a diving pool and an eight-lane pool for training.

The Squash Stadium, built using German technology, has 10 courts for singles which can be altered into eight doubles courts and a main court. The stadium was built at a cost of about RM25 million.

The RM74 million Hockey Stadium, which had been upgraded in May, can accommodate 12,000 spectators. The stadium had been tested during the qualifying rounds for the World Cup Hockey in March.

Meanwhile, the Bukit Kiara Lawn Bowls Complex which has five natural grass greens has seats for 1,500 spectators, while the Indoor Netball Stadium has a seating capacity for 1,000. The Bukit Kiara Sports Complex was built at a cost of RM24 million.

Many foreign visitors who had come earlier to see the preparations at Bukit Jalil for the Kuala Lumpur '98 were impressed by the beauty and majesty of the components of the National Sports Complex.

They felt Malaysia has succeeded in creating a well-equipped sports infrastructure which may make it possible for the country to become a leading sporting nation of the future.

An Australian journalist who visited Bukit Jalil recently was confident that with such good sports infrastructure, Malaysia will not only become the best ever host of the Commonwealth Games, but may also be able to groom many sportsmen of international standard in the near future.

-- BERNAMA

AM DSR