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Mahathir-Commonwealth

COMMONWEALTH GAMES PROVED MALAYSIA'S CAPABILITIES- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight expressed the government's appreciation and highest esteem to the Commonwealth Games '98 volunteers, the many people who came to watch the games and all those who helped in one way or another to ensure its success.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia's success in organising and conducting the games threw open greater opportunities for the country to achieve even bigger successes in various fields including the world of sports.

Even those who initially cast doubts on Malaysia's ability to host the event, in the end conceded that the 16th Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur was the best games ever, Dr Mahathir said.

"This proves our abilities, proves Malaysia Can," he said at a dinner at the Stadium Nasional, National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil in honour of the volunteers and others involved in the games.

He also attributed the success of the games to the 20,000 volunteers, apart from the athletes and the people who paid to watch the games.

The Games were held from Sept 11 to 21.

The Prime Minister also paid particular praise to the Sokagakkai team which was responsible for the "flip card" display. for its high standard of discipline.

"Many guests including foreign dignitaries thought that the flip card display involved mechanical technology but I have to state that behind the flip cards there were people," he said.

Members of the team were so loyal and disciplined to the extent of sitting for six hours to put up their display, he said.

"We are proud of you," said Dr Mahathir to loud applause and expressed the hope that others would emulate such high discipline.

The Prime Minister also congratulated the athletes for their overwhelming success.

Dr Mahathir said he himself did not expect Malaysia to win up to 10 gold medals apart from 14 silver and 12 bronze.

"We were fourth among 70 Commonwealth countries something which we did not even dream," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped Malaysian athletes would practise even harder to achieve Olympic status.

Apart from eyeing the Olympics, Malaysian athletes should also aim for success at the SEA Games and Asian Games, he added.

At the function the Prime Minister presented awards to Malaysian athletes who won medals in the Kuala Lumpur 16th Commonwealth Games, the second biggest sports event in the world hosted for the first time in Asia.

-- BERNAMA

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