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Dr M: We are delivering despite various obstacles

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MALAYSIA has completed all the facilities and preparations for the Commonwealth Games despite losing several hundred billions of US dollars due to the speculation by currency traders and stock market players, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

What was then a large piece of vacant land is now a full-fledged sports complex, said Dr Mahathir.

"It is a measure of our commitment to the Games and our seriousness about keeping our promises," he said when opening the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) general assembly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Saying that the Government is also sorry that negative reports about Malaysia and the Games still persist, Dr Mahathir said he hoped the presence of so many people who would otherwise not visit Malaysia will help to correct the image of Malaysia that has been painted by the "less friendly" of the international media.

The Prime Minister said while Malaysia may not receive any medals, it has achieved many firsts.

The 16th Commonwealth Games is the first ever held in Asia, the first to be opened by the constitutional monarch of a non-British Commonwealth country, the first to feature team sports and the first games to receive unprecedented government support at every level.

He added that the Games is also the first to use the latest in information technology. It is also the first to set up a host news agency.

Kuala Lumpur also makes its mark as the first games with a 100 per cent turnout, including a new comrade in the Commonwealth Games Association, Kiribati.

Dr Mahathir said the Games is not just about winning medals.

"Winning is important ... the camaraderie and the spirit of friendly competition should still be valued. In a world so full of bitterness and conflicts, we really do not need to bring this into the playing fields as well," he said.

"Victory comes in many ways, transcending social and ethnic barriers.

"Victory for Malaysia would be to carry our good name and to sustain sweet memories of all our foreign guests who come to witness this, the biggest sporting event we have ever hosted," he added.

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