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Hashim confident we can host other events

BUKIT JALIL, Fri. - Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd executive chairman Jen (R) Tan Sri Hashim Mohd Ali today expressed confidence in Malaysia's facilities and resources to host other games be they single or multi-sports events.

He said despite the economic downturn Malaysia had built sports facilities which are the best in the region and comparable to those found elsewhere in the world.

"This augurs well for Malaysian athletes as they will have modern facilities with state-of-the-art technology at their doorstep," he said at the opening ceremony of the 16th Commonwealth Games tonight.

Hashim said the Games had attracted 4,208 athletes, 2,460 officials and technical officials from six regions of the Commonwealth nations - Africa, America, Asia, Caribbean, Europe and Oceania - making it the biggest to be held in the history of the Commonwealth Games.

He said it was with pride that the Games greeted Cameroon and Mozambique for the first time, and congratulated Kiribati for being elected to the Commonwealth Games Federation.

Hashim also welcomed the Prime Minister of Fiji Sitiveni Rabuka who was here to witness his country participate in the Games.

Also present tonight was the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

Hashim said the Malaysian Government had given tremendous support towards the Games and thanked the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his contribution and endless support.

"He visited the various venues whilst under construction over the weekend or public holidays unannounced that kept us on our toes.

"I do believe his personal involvement in the preparation of the Games gave the added courage in battling the challenges that faced us," he said.

He thanked the sponsors, suppliers, partners and licensees, as well as volunteers for their hardwork. He also thanked all Malaysians who had given inspiration and commitment to the Games.

Hashim urged the country's athletes to live up to the spirit of "Forever as One", the KL '98 theme song.

"The Commonwealth Games is a gathering of youths and the Games have always been regarded as a friendly games."

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