

03 OCT 1998

Games-Dinner

MORE THAN 15,000 ATTEND PREMIER DINNER

By: Zaiful Mohd Ariffin

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- "The dream finally became a reality", this is the right description of the atmosphere at the Premier Dinner given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad following the success in hosting the 16th Commonwealth Games from Sept 11 to 21.

The gathering of more than 15,000 Malaysians at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here tonight comprised of volunteers, athletes, sponsors, officers from government agencies, police and military personnel who were involved in the Games.

The six-year wait from the day Malaysia was named as the host for the 16th edition of the Commonwealth Games finally paid off when Malaysia were acknowledged as the best ever host for the Games.

Although Malaysia failed to emerge as the overall champion, the total haul of 10 gold, 14 silver and 12 bronze medals was a significant achievement in Malaysian sports history.

It was evident that the government's initiative in developing athletes under the Projek Jaya '98 had brought the desired results after four years of preparation to raise the Jalur Gemilang in the international sports arena.

Malaysia created history as the first nation in Asia to host the Commonwealth Games.

This success was acknowledged by the Prime Minister who graced the occasion. The crowd was entertained by local artistes and a fireworks display immediately after Dr Mahathir's speech.

"The success proved our determination and strict discipline in becoming the best host in the history of the Games, in fact it also showed that Malaysia Boleh," Dr Mahathir said in his speech.

He said more than 20,000 volunteers helped the government to make the Games a success.

"We can build this huge stadium (Stadium Nasional) which is expensive but to organise a sports meet such as the Commonwealth games is more difficult than to build this highly sophisticated stadium...but we Malaysians had proven our capability," Dr Mahathir added.

-- BERNAMA

ZMA AO