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Malaysia can do it again

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MALAYSIA remains confident in its quest to stage the 2006 Asian Games and rightly so. We have the best facilities and infrastructure to meet the requirements set by the Olympic Council of Asia.

We have a proven track record - our splendid organisation of The 16th Commonwealth Games. Kuala Lumpur '98 has gone down in history as the "Best Games Ever".

Achieving this at a time when our country was facing a difficult economic situation was due in great measure to the unstinting support of the government and our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's own enthusiastic and personal direction.

The recipe for success then as now is the support of the Government, the Sports Ministry, the Olympic Council of Malaysia, the media and, most of all, the people.

With a young and energetic Sports Minister leading the charge, we remain more than hopeful.

As the Sports Ministry steps up its efforts to drum up support on all fronts for the 2006 Asian Games bid, let us, the people of Malaysia, show our support for this cause by being proactive in all programmes planned towards this end.

Failure should never be for lack of trying. We have done it before and, God willing, we can do it again.

Let us not allow the recent events, namely the hostage taking at Sipadan Island and the arms heist in Grik, dent our country's image as a safe haven for visitors and tourists.

All necessary steps are being taken by the authorities at damage control and to ensure such incidents are nipped in the bud. Security aspects are high on the agenda especially when international sporting events are held in the country.

We can do away with any negative publicity which the foreign press are quick to exploit.

I can still remember that during the slight haze in our country in early 1998, the foreign press gave the impression that our whole country was engulfed in thick smoke that was life threatening to the people.

When I was the Commonwealth Games Village Manager (Residential Zone), I came across a letter to the NST from one of your readers, Datuk Abdullah Samsudin. In his letter "Don't Rush to Protect Games Organisers", which appeared on Aug 28, 1997. He said, "I suggest Mohd Idris opens a book of appreciation and comments for foreigners. We will then come to know the pluses and minuses of the Games Management based on their point of view".

I took his advice. Today, with our impending bid for the 2006 Asian Games under consideration, I felt it an appropriate time to tell you that many favourable comments were made about the efforts made to make Kuala Lumpur 1998 "The Best Games of the 20th Century". Yes, Malaysia Boleh!