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Malaysia have what it takes, OCA

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MALAYSIA'S 2006 Asian Games bid is based on reality and not promises and their track record in hosting world class meets is reknowned.

This was the point that was driven to Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) vice-president Muhammad Latif Butt and his inspection team yesterday.

Malaysia, Latif and his colleagues were briefed, do not need new infrastructure as virtually everything is in place and there need not be fear that the Games, if awarded to Kuala Lumpur, will be lacking.

The others in the inspection team are OCA treasurer Santiparb Tejavanija of Thailand, international relations manager Vinod Kiwari of India and Jordan's Dr Muwaffak Fawaz, the sports committee chairman.

"All the bidding cities have their strength and weaknesses. However, we are happy with Malaysia's presentation," said Dr Muwaffak after a briefing by Malaysian officials at the National Stadium yesterday.

"We are here on a fact finding mission and hope to inspect as many venues as possible before putting forward our recommendations to the main committee."

Malaysia, or rather Kuala Lumpur, face rival bids from New Delhi (India), Doha (Qatar) and Hong Kong.

The OCA decision on the 2006 hosts is expected when they meet in Pusan, South Korea on Nov 12.

But it is reliably learnt that Malaysia's strongest challenge could come from Doha and Hong Kong for several reasons but if the OCA decision is based on merit alone, it is hard to see Kuala Lumpur failing to land the job.

The 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games proved that Malaysia can organise events of large stature.

They have the support that is vital from the Government, the private sector and the public.

No major Games, especially in today's climate, can run without the Government's help as the organisers of the Sydney Olympics are finding out and that is another plus point for Malaysia.

That point will definitely be driven home when Latif and his colleagues meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his office in Putra Jaya today.

And the facilities, as the OCA team would have found out yesterday, are world class and more than capable of handling the expected 35 sports that will be contested in 2006.

More importantly, the country wants it as the "Malaysia Boleh" signature campaign showed.

So when Latif and his team make their recommendations, they should keep this in mind. Malaysia can do it.

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