

16 SEP 2001
SEA-Mahathir
WE CAN BE THE SEA GAMES CHAMPS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Malaysian athletes to go all out to win the five gold medals at stake on the final day of the SEA Games tomorrow to enable Malaysia to emerge as the overall champions for the first time.

"I am confident Malaysia can be the SEA Games champions," the Prime Minister told reporters after dropping by at the National Aquatic Complex here.

As at 8 tonight, Malaysia was in a comfortable position to become the overall champions after collecting 106 gold, 72 silver and 83 bronze medals. Defending champions Thailand had 98 gold, 82 silver and 85 bronze medals.

The five gold medals tomorrow will come from equestrian (two), synchronised diving (two) and synchronised swimming (one).

Dr Mahathir said he was somewhat disappointed when Thailand overtook Malaysia in the medal tally for a brief spell yesterday but was happy to see Malaysia take the lead again.

The Prime Minister said he had not expected Malaysia's gold medal haul to surpass the century mark as its target was only 80 golds.

"But the spirit shown by the national athletes was very high. There really tried hard.

"We shouldn't be winning in some of the events but we won, boxing for instance. They really went all out," he said.

At the aquatic complex, Dr Mahathir sat together with the public to cheer for the Malaysian contestants.

As he was returning, the people went to shake his hand in large numbers and he obliged them, even when his vehicle had started moving.

-- BERNAMA
JM ZS MAI SK