

London sports centre project still on

KUALA LUMPUR: The Youth and Sports Ministry will continue pursuing the building of the controversial sports centre outside London despite strong objections from many quarters, including the opposition parties.

Its minister Datuk Azalina Othman Said said the matter had to be pursued as it was needed to mould Malaysian sportsmen to become high achievers.

She slammed detractors of the project, saying their criticisms were baseless especially with regard to the cost of the project.

"I don't see why this project has become an issue because the cost, which was raised by Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang, has yet to be finalised," she told reporters here yesterday.

Media reports that the centre will cost RM490 million triggered an outcry from many sides including opposition parties who claimed that the money could be put to better use in Malaysia.

Azalina, however, said the Finance Ministry had the last say

on the matter as it is a government project.

The proposed centre is to be located at the Tun Abdul Razak Rubber Research Centre (TARRC) in Brickendonbury in Hertfordshire, some 24km from the approved site of the 2012 London Olympic Games village.

However, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi last Wednesday had said that the British authorities would not allow additional buildings to be built at the TARRC because it has been gazetted as a heritage site.

In view of this, Azalina said the National Sports Council (NSC) would meet the Malaysian Rubber Board next week to discuss the possibility of sharing the TARRC facility.

The outcome of the meeting would be presented to the Cabinet Committee on Sports when it held its next meeting in September for further consideration, Azalina added. - Bernama

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