

Newspaper	The Sun
Date	31 July 2015

Najib opens 128th IOC session

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The Sun
- 31/7/2015

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said the prestige of hosting the 128th International Olympic Committee (IOC) Congress is a reflection of the seriousness that the country places on sports.

In his speech at the session yesterday, Najib also cited previous experiences of the nation hosting international tournaments, such as the Commonwealth Games in 1998.

“That was the first time it had been held in Asia, and with a record number of nations taking part. Malaysia also, I might add, took the fourth largest number of medals,” he said at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here yesterday.

“Perhaps we can do even better when we host the South East Asian (SEA) Games in 2017. And we look forward to other sporting

events being held here, he added.

The prime minister also took the opportunity to point out how sports can be crucial in a multi-cultural country like Malaysia.

“In a country such as ours, we recognise and welcome the ability of sports to be a unifying force.

“When a team is working together, differences of ethnicity and faith melt away as the players unite in pursuit of a common goal.

“We have a word for that here – iMalaysia – that represents our efforts towards unity, tolerance, perseverance, inclusion and a culture of excellence,” he added.

The 128th IOC session, which will take place from July 30 to Aug 3 at the KL Convention Centre, will among other things, elect the host city for the 2022 Winter Olympics and the 2020 Winter Youth Olympics.