

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: THE OPENING OF THE WORLD OPEN SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

VENUE: THE PAN PACIFIC HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 02 OCT 1989

TIME:

The President of The Malaysian Squash
Racquet Association;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen;

I would like to thank the organisers for giving me the honour to address this gathering and to officiate the opening of this World Open Squash Championship. It is with great pleasure that I bid 'selamat datang' to all foreign officials and players.

2. I take this opportunity to thank the International Squash Federation for choosing Kuala Lumpur as the venue of this Championship. I am confident that the organisers, the Malaysian Squash Racquet Association, is capable of ensuring the success of this Championship, even though this is the first time it is hosting a squash competition of this stature.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. In the past Malaysia has hosted a few world sports championships, including those for badminton and hockey. Indeed it is Malaysia's hope to host more world-level or international sports championships in the future. This World Open Squash Championship, hopefully, will be a prelude for Malaysia to host more of such championships in the future.

4. The Malaysian Government is supportive of all sports and encourages local sports organisations to bid for world or international sports championships to be held in this country. There is no doubt that such championship events will stimulate greater participative interest and improve the standards of the particular game and sports generally. It will of course make Malaysia better known in the sports world where the number of players and spectators are huge and increasing all the time.

5. For a country like Malaysia, this is important. Besides, competitive sports at the international level help foster friendly relationship between individuals and between countries. Even countries at war are known to forget their enmity during sports. Sportsmen may not be consciously

working at it but they do contribute a fair amount towards world peace. One must not forget that it was a game of ping-pong which ended some 25 years of confrontation between the United States and China. As a politician and pacifist I would like to say long live ping-pong. I hope that squash will likewise be a breaker of ice in international relations. How much more peaceful the world would be if disputes between nations are settled in the playing fields.

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. We are fortunate that besides the Government, sports associations and private organisations have funnelled their energies and finances to upgrade Malaysian sports. The latest move is the establishment of The Foundation for Malaysian Sporting Excellence. I take this opportunity to congratulate those concerned in sponsoring and establishing The Foundation. The Government for its part will look into more support for sports generally and will make international competitions held here more attractive to participants from abroad and locally. The Government wants to be quite sporting about sports.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. I am indeed delighted that Malaysia has been entrusted with this World Open Squash Championship. I also hope our foreign visitors will find time to visit and get to know this country while here.

8. Lastly, I trust that the spirit of sportsmanship will prevail at this Championship. It is now my pleasure to officially declare open this World Open Squash Championship.