

Sunday Star SAYS

Come together as one to help country soar in Games

A HAUL of 111 gold medals might seem like a tall order, but according to Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, this projection is based purely on the current form of our athletes taking part in the 29th SEA Games, which officially kicked off yesterday.

It has been 16 years since Malaysia last played host, and as luck would have it, we hit that staggering figure in 2001, too. So it's easy to see this looking like a walk in the park. But that is a sensationalistic.

Still, our chinlone team: synchronised swimmers and archers have all been bang on target, setting the wheels in motion for our warriors to realise Mission: Almost

Impossible. This isn't a sprint, it's a marathon, because KL2017 takes place over 12 days.

Blood, sweat and tears will separate winners from losers battling it out across many hours on the tracks, courts, turf and in the water.

It's the same kind of spirit athletes pour into years of training, hoping to arrive at a major sporting platform.

Ultimately, everyone wants to stand up and be counted, because they want to do it for the flag.

So, why shouldn't we dare to dream? Didn't it all start with one, anyway?

When Bapa Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman cried out "Merdeka" on Aug 31, 1957, he ushered in the

start of a country that stood tall with its mixed race makeup. And we've achieved great things since, especially in sports, where we have celebrated and cried together.

There is an indescribable romance attached to the 1980 Moscow Olympics football team, and the AFF Suzuki Cup team of 2010 has a lovely fairy tale to it, proving what playing on your patch can do, especially since the team pretty much sealed the deal in the first leg of that final playoff.

Stadium Bukit Jalil nearly split at the seams with the thundering noise of our supporters seven years ago.

So is it home advantage that has spurred our sportsmen and women

on? And if it is (and we surely know it is), what defines home advantage?

We define it - each and every one of us. Spare a thought, if we can't be united in sport, what can bring us together then? We should ask, consequently, are we even worth our individual colours if we cannot be as one for a common goal?

But of course we are. And that's why, whether it's five people huddled in front of a dorm TV or the thousands who throng the stadiums, pools and arenas, everyone wants to get into the thick of action, because we all want to be a part of something truly special.

This sense of camaraderie comes

from the same heartwarming scenes that once bound us in unbridled love for our country at the 1992 Thomas Cup 25 years ago, when Malaysia beat Indonesia on home turf to take the trophy home after a quarter of a century's asking. Stadium Negara erupted that night of May 16.

And this is precisely the kind of euphoric atmosphere our athletes need to do the nation proud at KL2017.

So, let's leave the daily grind behind for a while, and hit the halls and arenas, steal a few glances at flickering TVs in the distance, or celebrate privately behind the comfort of our devices.

Let's do this for Malaysia.

Big plans ahead for Langkawi

Govt mulls making island the 'Monaco of the East' for luxury tourism

By SHARANPAL SINGH RANDHAWA
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LANGKAWI: Plans are being made to further improve tourism in Langkawi with the implementation of luxury tourism and the promotion of people's tourism concepts for the island, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He added that the Government was considering two concepts in further developing Langkawi as a tourist destination, one of which was to make it the "Monaco of the East" for luxury tourism and the other to promote people's tourism.

"We have laid the foundation to bring Langkawi to the next phase of development," he said at the "Leader with the People" programme and at the launch of the People's Housing Project and Chenang fishermen's jetty here yesterday.

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Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak

Najib also said Langkawi will retain its duty-free status as long as the Barisan Nasional government remains in power.

"In fact, we will bring more projects to the island."

Najib said the successful development of Langkawi was not due to the efforts of any individual or Umno leader alone, but because of the strong support of the party members he led.

He also said that the housing project launched here proved the Government is concerned for the need of the people on the island to



People's leader: Najib sharing a light moment with some youths during the launch of the Langkawi Digital Carnival at Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC). — Bernama

own their own homes.

The RM242mil project is expected to be completed by 2019.

"This is not a political project because the contractor has already started work on it," he said of the project which involves the construction of five blocks of 11-storey apartments.

At another function, Najib said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's attempts to vilify the country's leaders have backfired on him.

Without naming the former premier, he said it has been understood that the country's leaders would pass the mantle to their successors and give them the opportu-

nity to lead in their own way.

"I've always wanted the best for the country, having transformed it for the better by bringing in more development and investments.

"This former leader may have forgotten, but I remember it is the principle of a Prime Minister to do good for the country," he said at the opening of the Langkawi Umno division delegates meeting.

Najib said Umno's principles dictated that a former party leader should respect the initiatives carried out by the present Prime Minister.

"This has been done since the tenure of the first prime minister

and we continue to carry on the good work done by our predecessors," he added.

Najib also thanked the Langkawi Umno members who have stayed loyal to the party.

Earlier, Najib launched Bank Muamalat Malaysia Berhad's digital mobile application "i-Muamalat Mobile" during the Langkawi Digital Carnival.

The service, which can be downloaded from Google Play Store and Apple Store, offers customers online banking services such as money transfers, bill payments and credit top-up payments for handphone users.

AirAsia targets three million visitors for Langkawi

LANGKAWI: AirAsia has targeted to bring three million visitors here this year, almost double last year's 1.6 million.

Its group chief executive officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said the airline has flown over a million people here from January to July with its 238 weekly flights and is aiming to hit the three million mark by year-end.

"Our vision is to make Langkawi as connected as Phuket, if not greater," he said at the official launching of AirAsia's Langkawi-Shenzhen route by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Langkawi International Airport yesterday.

Fernandes said the direct route, which started on Aug 9 and operates three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, would further boost tourism in Langkawi and was in line with the Langkawi Development Authority's mission to tap into new foreign markets.

AirAsia now has seven direct flights to Langkawi, with four domestic routes - Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor Baru and Kuching - and three international routes - Singapore, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. It also connects Langkawi to 15 countries such as Vietnam, South Korea and Taiwan via its Fly-Thru flights.

Fernandes said direct international tourists flown by AirAsia to Langkawi increased from 83,754 passengers in 2015 to 187,433 passengers in 2016, a 120% growth.

"This represents a contribution of RM300mil to the GDP based on the 12 times multiplier effect and 2016 was the first year when international tourists outnumbered domestic tourists," he said in his speech.

Speaking to reporters later, Fernandes said AirAsia would continue to promote Langkawi, especially to tourists from China, India and Asean countries.

Weather						Prayer times						
	GEORGE TOWN	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KOTA BARU	K. KINABALU	KUCHING	ALOR SETAR	PENANG	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KUANTAN	KOTA BARU
AM	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	05:55	05:56	05:53	05:46	05:46	05:52
							05:55	05:56	05:53	05:46	05:46	05:52
							13:24	13:24	13:19	13:11	13:13	13:17
							16:35	16:37	16:34	16:27	16:28	16:29
							19:32	19:31	19:25	19:15	19:19	19:25
PM	Rain	Rain	No rain	Thunderstorms	No rain	Thunderstorms	20:43	20:42	20:36	20:25	20:29	20:32