

REAL CHALLENGE IS TO ENSURE USE OF BUILDINGS AFTER GAMES

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The new Sarawak Squash Centre is one of the venues for the Games. — Photo: YU JI/The Star

KUCHING: Sarawak's physical infrastructure preparation as hosts of this year's Malaysian Games is second to none, says Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Datuk M Saravanan.

But the real challenge will be how to ensure the new buildings will not become white elephants, he said.

"In terms of infrastructure development, it's really great. International standard even.

"Planning how to use the facilities after Sukma will be important," he told reporters here yesterday after handing over the new Sarawak Squash Centre at the Petra Jaya Sports Complex.

"We'll have to keep using the place so that it doesn't become a waste.

"I hope the Government will continue finding uses for the facilities.

"Use it and take care of the surroundings," he added.

The new squash centre, built at a cost of RM7mil, is one of the largest in Malaysia with eight courts.

It is next to the RM160mil Sarawak Aquatics Centre, which is the centrepiece of the Sports Complex that also includes two massive outdoor stadiums and an indoor stadium.

Also within the compound are lawn bowl facilities and hockey fields.

This is the second time Sarawak is hosting the Malaysia Games. The first was in 1990, during which the state was overall champion. The state also emerged as champion in 1992 and 1994.

In the 2014 Games, Sarawak was third (47 gold medals), behind Federal Territory (55) and Terengganu (51).

This time, the state has set an ambitious target of winning 72 golds out of 379 events.

Saravanan praised the state government, saying that based on what he had seen, the coming Sukma could be the best organised Games.

It begins on July 22 until 31, followed by the Malaysia Para Games on August 5 to 12.

Some 6,000 athletes are taking part.

Venues also include Kuching South City Stadium (gymnastics, boxing), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (archery), Chung Hua Primary School No 3 (wushu) and the Megaland Bowling Centre in Batu Kawah.

Sibu's new Indoor Stadium will host the badminton events and Miri's Marina Bay will be used for sailing.