

Three States fighting for 'right'

But Pahang and Perlis appear to be favourites to get new sports schools

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THREE States — Pahang, Perlis and Sabah — are vying for the right to build the two new sports schools that have been planned under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Although no affirmative decision has been made by the Education Ministry, officials from the ministry and even the Sports Ministry, were left stunned when Sabah Sports Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun announced on Sunday night that work on the third sport school, costing RM80 million, would start in Kota Kinabalu early next year.

According to Masidi, two sites — the campuses of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) have been identified as possible locations.

"The management of the two universities have agreed to alienate about 20 hectares for the school," Masidi told Bernama.

He added that "either site was okay with us" and said he would write to Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein and Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapha Mohamed on the matter.

"If everything goes well, I hope work on the project can start early next year," added Masidi.

"From what I have seen in the sports schools in Bukit Jalil and Bandar Pe-

nawar, the academic and sports facilities are fantastic. So, we are lucky to be the third State to have this sports school."

There are currently two sports schools — the Bukit Jalil Sports School (BJSS) in Kuala Lumpur and the Bandar Penawar Sports School (BPSS) in Johor.

However, according to Education Ministry officials, no decisions have been made.

Furthermore, according to a source, the allocation approved is only enough to build two sports schools.

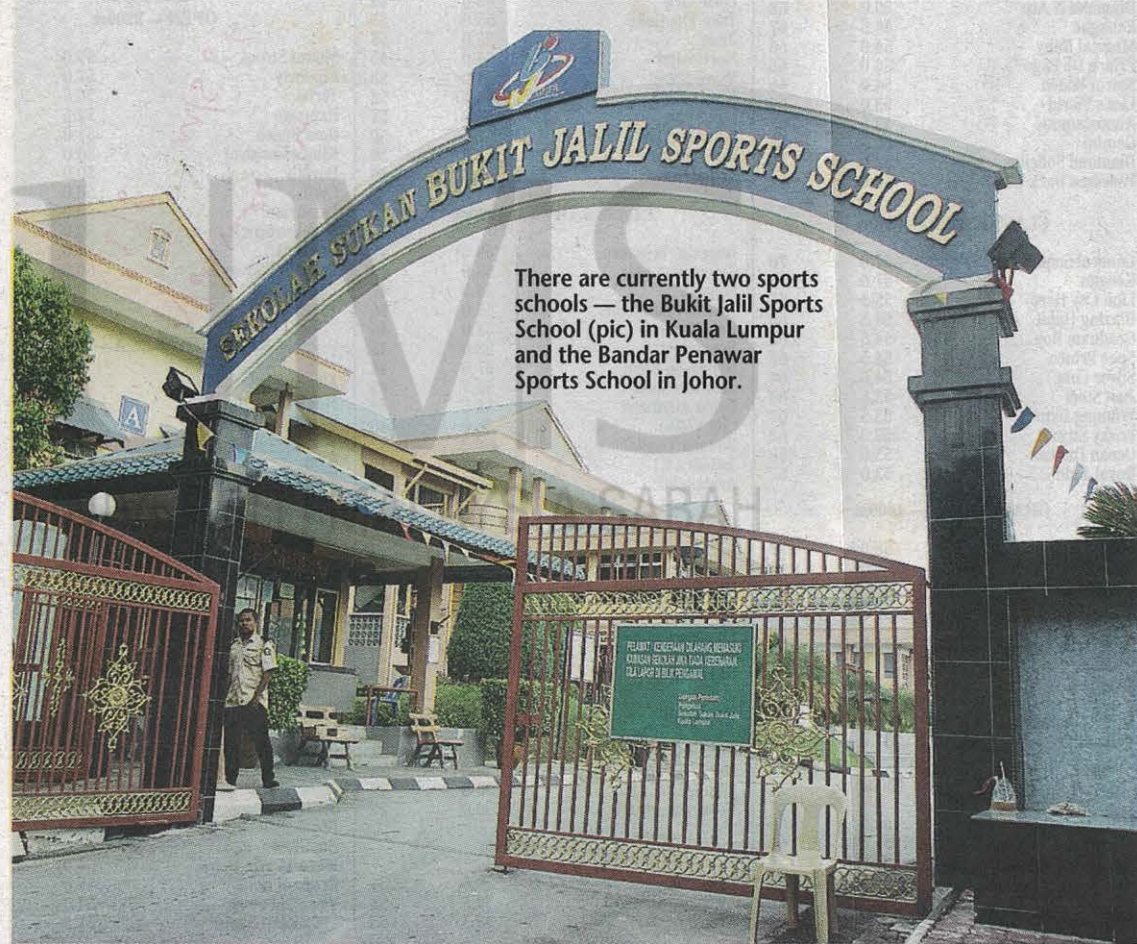
And it is learnt that Perlis and Pahang are strong candidates to get the schools.

Although BJSS and BPSS receive some assistance from the National Sports Council (NSC), they have come under the jurisdiction of the Education Ministry.

But opinions have been divided on which authority should run the sports schools as some parties believe the Sports Ministry should take over the management of the schools.

In fact, the Cabinet Committee for Sports, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, have given the mandate to the Education Ministry to come up with a working paper to find the best solution to the debate.

But now it looks like there will be another debate on which States deserve to have a sports school.



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