

## SUKMA IX SABAH 2002

# More than just sports

**KOTA KINABALU:** Sporting events not only provide an avenue to discover new talents but also to create awareness on the importance of mental and physical health.

Chief Minister, Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said that participation in sports activities also creates a sense of togetherness among the public.

Speaking at the launching of the Sukma XI games village in University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here yesterday, Chong said that sports can help to broaden the mind of the individual.

"A sporting event of this momentum paves the way towards strengthening national integration as it involves athletes from all over the country," he said.

Chong who is also Tourism, Environment, Science and Technology Minister also urged all visiting athletes to take the advantage of the two week sporting event to take time out and visit some of Sabah's tourist attractions.

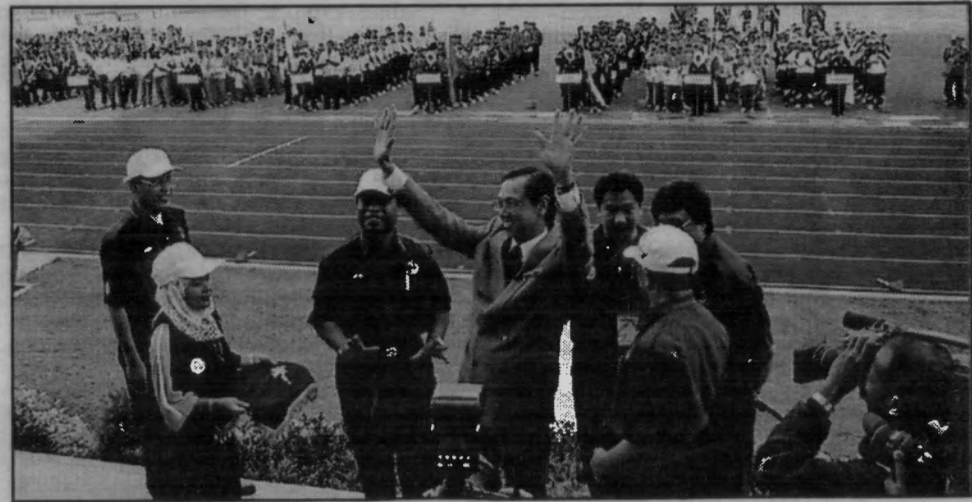
"I hope that you will use this opportunity to take in the sights as well as interact with the locals," he said adding that he hopes they will go home with sweet memories of their time spent here.

According to Chong, to ensure that the athletes and volunteers are provided with comfortable facilities during the two-week sporting event, the State government had spent RM132 million in preparation and organizing of Sukma XI.

"Another RM73 million was spent on upgrading the facilities in the Likas Sport Complex where most of the events will be held," he added.

As the official games village, UMS is providing accommodation for 3,200 athletes and officials from the 23 sporting events that will be competed during the two-week stint.

Another 2,600 athletes and officials are putting up in Taman Indah Permai, Kurnia Perdana and Kingfisher Park not far from the university.



**ACKNOWLEDGING THE CROWD ...** Chong raising his hands in acknowledgment to the crowd's applause after he signed the plaque to officially mark the opening of the Games village.