



SPARKLING ENDING ...
A spectacular display of fireworks at the SEA Games closing ceremony last night at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak along with athletes and officials from 11 countries who participated in the Games were in attendance at the ceremony. The next SEA Games will be held in the Philippines in 2019.

ICE RACE ... Speed skater (short track) Anja Chong leading the pack in heat one of the women's 1000m at MyNISS, Damansara yesterday. She went on to win gold in the final.

Sporting event created 'moments of unity'

▶ FROM FRONT PAGE

"Events such as these should be continued because when we have something to cheer, this is the time when your nationalism spirit is heightened."

"This is also the time we can see people from different races sitting side by side in cheering for their nation," he said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Joseph Kurup agreed that the SEA Games had created "moments of unity" for National Day.

He called for the momentum to be maintained.

Kurup, who is in charge of

national unity, added that fractions or disunity would not occur among Malaysians if they held true to the principles embedded in the Rukun Negara.

Highlighting sports as an important mechanism of unity, he said such games could eliminate the domination of one particular ethnic group, as well as contributing to the "one nation, one vision" spirit.

"Such instances was seen during the semifinal football match between Malaysia and Indonesia.

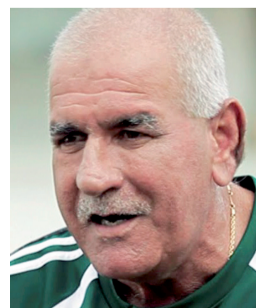
"I saw youths of various races drinking together in a mamak restaurant to give their support to the national team," he said.

"What's even more pleasant was scenes of our younger generation hugging each other at the victory of our team."

Kurup said such sporting events should be maintained, especially at the district and state level as it could inculcate interaction among the various races.

Gerakan vice-president Datuk Dr Asharuddin Ahmad said the triumphant sporting event serving as a run-up to the National Day had indeed created a "feel good factor" in fostering national unity.

Asharuddin, who is also the party's national unity bureau chairman, added that the SEA Games had brought Malaysians



Santokh.



Kurup.



Asharuddin.

closer before the Merdeka event. "This is the time for us to continue with the euphoria by saying no to racism, especially

with the visibly heightened patriotism spirit among Malaysians after the games," he said.