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Muhyiddin: Public transport a big worry

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SPORTS Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday he doubted the present public transport system in the Klang Valley would be able to meet with demand during the Commonwealth Games on Sept 11-21 next year.

"I am sorry but I don't have confidence in the present system. We are still trying to find a formula to solve our traffic woes and the dispersal system at Bukit Jalil," said Muhyiddin.

"The big question is whether, when all the people converge here, can the KL public transport system operate well. If not it would create problems for us."

Muhyiddin was speaking after chairing the Games executive committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur. Also present was Jen (rtd) Tan Sri Hashim Mohamed Ali, the executive chairman of Sukom Ninety Eight, the organisers of the Games.

Muhyiddin said the traffic system around the main venue and Kuala Lumpur continues to be the main concern of the organisers.

"The Traffic and Security Committee told us that going by their projections nearly 70 per cent of the visitors are expected to use their own transport."

At present, he said, the Intrakota bus company have 1,500 buses and Park May 600, and there are about 11,000 taxis in Kuala Lumpur.

"Are they adequate? I cannot answer this question as we do not know the actual number of people coming to Kuala Lumpur for the Games."

Police have proposed that more people be allowed to use their own vehicles to ease the burden on the public transport system but then this would mean that more parking space has be identified.

Sukom, said Muhyiddin, would ensure that the various competitions did not clash with the timing of special entertainment events and sideshows to ease traffic congestion.

Muhyiddin also disclosed that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had consented to the appointment of Olympic Council of Malaysia president Tan Sri Hamzah Abu Samah as joint deputy chairman of the Games executive committee with Hashim.

The committee, which comprises 12 sub-committees, is chaired by Muhyiddin.

Hamzah was left in the lurch when the Games management committee of which he was joint-chairman with Hashim was dissolved in the wake of the latter's resignation episode.

On publicity and promotion, Muhyiddin said 500 billboards will be out up all over the country from end of the year to September next year.

He said the Finance Ministry have allocated RM30 million for the Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board to promote the Games overseas.

Muhyiddin said the committee also decided to look into accommodation for Malaysians coming from abroad to witness the Games.

"One of the suggestions is for Government-owned training centres and hostels such as ITM, UPM and UKM to provide affordable accommodation with bed and breakfast, some as cheap as RM10. We must as some families cannot afford hotel rates."

On the training of athletes, Muhyiddin said it is entering the third phase and the focus will be on six sports that are medal prospects. They are tenpin bowling, weightlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, shooting, badminton and lawn bowls.

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