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Service charge for tickets sold overseas

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FOREIGNERS intending to buy tickets for next year's Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games have been advised to purchase them via the Internet to avoid paying astronomical prices.

Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad, the organiser of the Games, believes this is the best alternative as they would not be able to control prices of tickets sold outside Malaysia.

Although tickets sold in Malaysia and overseas will be priced the same, those in foreign countries will be subjected to a service charge which will be at the discretion of the respective ticketing agents.

The sale of tickets will be launched on Saturday.

Sukom assistant media manager K. Chandrashekran admitted that the company could not control the quantum of the levy imposed, as service taxes would most likely differ from country to country.

"The quoting of astronomical prices may still occur, but buyers can bypass this by purchasing tickets via the Internet."

He advised foreign ticketing agents to impose a reasonable levy which would not burden buyers.

"There is no doubt they (ticketing agents) too want to make money, but let it be a reasonable amount and not be taxing to fans."

Last week, Sukom executive chairman Tan Sri Mohamed Hashim Ali criticised foreign ticketing and travel agents who have deliberately hiked prices to cash in on the Games.

Tickets sold in Australia were found to be between A\$25 and A\$500 (RM55 and RM1100), which were two to 10 times higher than those sold in Malaysia. Malaysia's prices range between RM5 and RM500.

About 40 per cent of total ticket sales are expected to come from foreign buyers.

Today, the company has already received bookings for some 1.6 million tickets, of which RM5 million were from Australia alone.

Meanwhile, Sukom will on Thursday be briefing hoteliers on the role these establishments must play to greet the projected 100,000 sports fans and tourists expected for the Games.

The Games council is also scheduled to brief Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad this week on Sukom's progress today.

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