

# All systems go for <sup>57.9.98</sup> Commonwealth Games

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KUALA LUMPUR: With just four days before the 16th Commonwealth Games begin, host Malaysia is all geared up for the second largest sporting event in the world which will bring together 6,000 athletes and officials from 70 countries.

The prophets of doom, both within the country and abroad, who had been casting a pall over the Games with talks of haze and drought, may have to eat humble pie as all preparations point towards a great Games.

Despite a downpour yesterday, the full-dress rehearsal showed promise that spectators, both local and foreign, will be entertained to a colourful show with a strong Malaysian flavour.

However, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the organising committee of the opening ceremony would postpone the main performance to another day should it rain heavily on Sept 11.

"Luckily for us, the athletic events will

only start on Sept 16. This means we will have four days to hold the performance. Those who have bought tickets can come and watch anytime," he told reporters after witnessing the rehearsal yesterday.

He said the heavy rain during the rehearsal was also a good experience for the committee.

"They now know they have to drill more holes on the performing surface to drain away the water quickly," he said.

The main performance, *Aur Di Tebing*, a 45-minute cultural show, is scheduled to be televised live internationally.

Many of the 63,000 people with special passes, who had turned up to check out what the opening ceremony would be like, were quite impressed.

Another 60,000 people will be given the opportunity to view the final sneak preview on Wednesday, together with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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## 300 technical staff on 24-hour standby

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<sup>57.9.98</sup> Preparations picked up last month when the sound and lighting teams made the National Stadium their second home, in order to turn the main venue into a discotheque-cum-theatre using the latest technology.

Sweepers and cleaners stepped up their efforts to spruce up the stadiums during the last leg of preparations.

Some of them were even trained to look out for suspicious characters who may lurk within the venues.

Local chefs were spotted surf-

ing the Internet to learn how to whip up exotic dishes for the athletes and officials.

About 300 technical staff are on a 24-hour stand-by at all venues including the International Zone to make sure that all amenities and facilities are in working condition.