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Colourful stars draw the crowd

SO what is it that draws the crowd to the stadiums.

Is it the stars? Or the sport? Or is it a good showing by the Malaysians?

Some believe it is just the Commonwealth Games, the second biggest event in the world after the Olympics.

"I think it is a combination of factors. The media hype on the 100m was a major a factor," said Sukom marketing director Rosli Selamat.

Sukom sold about 58,000 tickets on the day when the 100m was run at the National Stadium.

"At 7.45pm we stopped selling," said Rosli.

"Add another 10,000 - those holding complimentary tickets, volunteers, officials and helpers. We reckon the crowd was 60,000 for the 100m."

It was the biggest ever for an athletic event in the region. Some say even in the world.

"I think even the Olympics cannot attract such a crowd," said Nashatar Singh, Sukom's director of operations, who has been to six Olympic Games.

Mind you, some 300 metres away 13,000 fans packed the Hockey Stadium to see Malaysia beat Canada and about the same time the Acquatic Centre was packed with 6,000 people who witnessed the last day's swimming action.

Thousands more were milling around the mammoth Bukit Jalil Complex, providing a festival like atmosphere.

In fact other sports, with the exception of boxing and shooting, are witnessing capacity crowds.

Malaysians and foreigners are flocking to see the best in action. In all venues one can feel the euphoria and adrenalin flowing.

"You can feel the fever. The Games spirit. Though it is a little to late in the day," said former Sports Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Sukom said suddenly there is a rush for tickets. Thousands are turning up daily to buy tickets for the athletics programme.

Tickets for most events the next three days have been sold out.

So it reminds us of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks that Malaysians have a tendency of buying tickets at the last minute.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Hasmah Mohamed Ali and the Yang diPertuan Agong are regulars.

They have visited practically all venues, rendering support to Malaysian athletes.

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