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Focus on world class athletes in sales blitz, Sukom '98 told

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Cabinet has asked Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad to step up promotional efforts for the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games by focusing on individual events and world-class competitors taking part in the Games.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the Cabinet had been informed by the company on its latest promotional plans and had reports from other ministries at its meeting today.

"The Cabinet wants more focus on positive news and advertisements about the Games which will create more interest among the public," he told a Press conference on the Bangsar-Commonwealth Games XVI carnival at his office today.

He said the Cabinet was satisfied with the reports but directed relevant agencies and ministries to also intensify efforts to make the Games a success.

But the promotional blitz would not involve more funds, he added. "Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad will have to spend on this extra promotional exercise using resources it already has."

Muhyiddin said although the recent aggressive promotional exercise had increased ticket sales, more was needed to ensure that the Games would attract more spectators.

"The effect of the promotional activities so far has been widespread. It has created an awareness of the event in the country, including fishing villages."

Muhyiddin said strong support from State Governments, the private sector and the media had also contributed to the promotion of the event.

He said so far 222,300 tickets out of 1.28 million tickets had been sold for the 10-day event, set to start on Sept 11.

While the figure might seem low, Muhyiddin said the sales had exceeded that of the last Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Australia.

He said the majority of the tickets sold were to local spectators, especially to those in the Klang Valley area. "We expected this since they live near the Games venue."

But Muhyiddin said the sales of tickets abroad had not been encouraging. "We are not too concerned about this right now since there has been very positive response locally. But we still hope that more foreigners will come to the Games."

On athletes' participation, Muhyiddin said while some big names, like Canada's 100-metre world record holder Donovan Bailey, would not be participating, the Games would not be short of other sporting stars.

"The participating countries have to submit the complete list of their athletes by Aug 11 and Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad will publicise the list of participants."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will officiate at the carnival in Bangsar on Aug 15. The event is jointly organised by the Ministry, Lembah Pantai Member of Parliament office, Bangsar Baru Business Council and several resident associations in Bangsar.

It is aimed at providing information to the public about the Games, increasing ticket sales and promoting Bangsar as a tourist destination during the Games.

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