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Games expected to draw 80,000 visitors, says Sabbaruddin

Ariff Awang

THE Kuala Lumpur '98 Games is expected to draw some 80,000 visitors during its duration from September 11 to 21 if there are more efforts to promote it, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said yesterday.

Initially, the ministry had projected between 60,000 and 70,000 visitors to come to the country during the 10-day event.

"I believe we can draw up to 80,000 visitors if we work a bit harder to promote and advertise the Games," he told reporters at a news conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He was commenting on claims by certain bodies that ticket sales for the 16th Commonwealth Games to foreigners have not been satisfactory.

Sukom Ninety Eight Sdn Bhd executive chairman Gen (Rtd) Tan Sri Hashim Mohd Ali had said that 80 per cent of the tickets for the Games is now for locals and 20 per cent for foreigners, contrary to the previous target.

Sabbaruddin stressed that the promotions for the Kuala Lumpur '98 Games should not only emphasised on the sport events of the Games itself but more importantly, it should also highlight events before and after the Games.

In line with this, he said the ministry - which plays the key role in promoting the Games - has circulated 15 million brochures on the Kuala Lumpur '98 Games to boost the tourism industry.

Meanwhile, the minister expressed satisfaction with recent positive reports by the local media on the KL International Airport.

"We should be more positive when writing stories about our airport..." he said.

Earlier, Sabbaruddin launched the Kuala Lumpur '98 Commonwealth Cultural Festival organised by the ministry in conjunction with the Kuala Lumpur '98 Games.

The festival, according to him, is divided into four categories - two of them, "Malaysian Cultural Festival" and "Cultural Exchange Events" - will be held throughout the year.

Of the other two events, the "Games Village Festival" will be held from September 3 to 20 and "Merdeka Square Festival" from September 12 to 20.

The Government has allocated RM10 million to the organisers of the festival.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports Elektriksuria, Malaysia's first electric car, will be widely used beginning today at all the venues of the Kuala Lumpur '98 Games.

Perusahaan Otomobil Elektrik Malaysia (POEM) chairman Datuk Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali said 50 units of the car will be handed over to the Games organisers, Sukom Ninety Eight, today for the pre-Commonwealth Games which will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

POEM will give another 250 units of the car for use during the duration of the Games beginning September 11, he told reporters after signing a RM200 million agreement between POEM and Teknocraft Sdn Bhd for Teknocraft to produce and supply the body of the car. Teknocraft was represented by its managing director, Encik Azhar Ibrahim.

Tajuddin said 70 units of the electric car will be painted in the colours of the national flags of the countries participating in the Games while the rest will be painted in the colours of the corporate logos of companies sponsoring the Games.

POEM, which plans to produce the third national car, is owned by Tenaga National Bhd through a 50 per cent equity holding while Frazer-Nash Research Ltd of UK holds 40 per cent, and the remaining 10 per cent by Composite Automotive Research and Tan Sri Basir Ismail.

On the Road Transport Department's approval for the car, Tajuddin said the car has been given approval for limited use on all roads except highways.

Tajuddin said the Elektriksuria will not be competing with the Kancil and Proton because it has a limited range of only 100km after which it needs to be recharged.

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