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Muhyiddin: PM wants more Malaysians involved

Randhir Singh

THE Commonwealth Games Council have directed the Sports Ministry and Sukom Ninety Eight to get wider participation of Malaysians in the Kuala Lumpur Games on Sept 11-21.

Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that the Council, chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, want Malaysians from different walks of life to be involved in the Games.

"The feeling of wanting to be involved is not there. Awareness of the Games is high but Malaysians are not excited about it," said Muhyiddin.

Muhyiddin said one indication of the lukewarm response lies with ticket sales of 70,000.

"We still have 1.2 million tickets yet to be sold. We want Malaysians to snap these tickets."

He said Ticketing Express, the company handling the sales, need to be more aggressive in their sales as he is worried the people might be satisfied watching the Games on television and not live at the stadiums.

Muhyiddin said he had informed the Council on the Ministry's programmes at State and district levels, which included public rallies, distribution of posters and buntings, the display of flags in buildings and shops, and art and decoration competitions.

Muhyiddin said Dr Mahathir has directed all committees to intensify their efforts so that all aspects were carefully arranged in view of the short time and he hoped there would be no major problems.

"He wants close cooperation among the various authorities, not only the organisations but also the people and the media to make the Games a success," he said.

He said the Prime Minister also wants cleanliness at all venues and public places to be improved to safeguard the country's image.

Muhyiddin said the meeting focussed on four issues - publicity and communications, opening and closing ceremonies, the traffic system and the public transport system.

He said the opening will be split into two with a pre-show, a break for Muslims to perform their magrib prayers and the main show.

Meanwhile an International Olympic Council (IOC) official is carrying out a final tests at the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Doping Centre in Penang.

The centre is expected to get accreditation at the end of this month.

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