

06 FEB 1998
Commonwealth
NOD FOR SIMULTANEOUS PRE-C'WEALTH GAMES

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Several sports bodies involved in the Commonwealth Games welcomed Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for the pre-Commonwealth Games to be held simultaneously.

The pre-Commonwealth event is deemed necessary to be held simultaneously in order to try out equipment as well transportation facilities and technical aspects to allow the games to run smoothly without glitches.

Yesterday Dr Mahathir called for the pre-Commonwealth games to be staged simultaneously at the National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil.

The events scheduled for the pre-Commonwealth event are athletics, aquatics, gymnastics, hockey and squash.

Sixteen sports will be contested during the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games on Sept 11 to 21. The sports associations will be organizing the pre-Commonwealth event separately between May and June.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday proposed that the best time to organize the pre-Commonwealth games was in June because the light rail transit system link to Bukit Jalil Sports Complex will be ready to be tested.

Malaysian Gymnastics Federation (MGF) honorary secretary N. Shanmugarajah welcomed the idea of staging the pre-Commonwealth games simultaneously with other sports.

"We do not have any problems if it will be staged at the same time...but Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad (Sukom) must inform us the exact date to avoid any glitches," he said.

Sukom has to inform the exact date to associations as soon as possible to allow them adjust their training schedule and preparations, he said.

Shanmugarajah said according to MGF's original plan, they will be staging the Pre-Commonwealth games in early June and start sending invitations to participating countries late this month.

For Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) any change of date in organising the pre-Commonwealth Games will not pose any problem as long as it will not clash with the final round of the Thomas and Uber Cup tournaments in Hong Kong from May 17 to 24.

BAM has set June 15 to 21 for the pre-Commonwealth badminton event and its honorary secretary Datuk Mohamed Al-Amin Abdul Majid said it was up to the Commonwealth Games Committee whether to name badminton as the sports that will be organized simultaneously with the other events which would be using the Bukit Jalil venue.

"We have no problems in terms of logistics because badminton will be held at the Kuala Lumpur Badminton Association Badminton Stadium in Cheras but we don't mind if they want us to stage it at the same time with others," he said when contacted in Ipoh.

Meanwhile the Malaysian National Cycling Federation (MNCF) president Abu Samah Wahab said if all the events involved in the Commonwealth Games to be staged in the pre-Games simultaneously, it would look like the real Games had already started.

"Although cycling are not one of the five sports to be staged simultaneously, it will add more colour to the competition," he said.

Malaysian Hockey Federation (MHF) honorary secretary S. Satgunam said the national hockey squad will not have any problems if the pre-Games event was to be staged simultaneously in June.

"The national hockey team will not necessarily engaged with the pre-games because we can think of organizing invitational competitions such as quadrangular tournaments and even club level competitions," said Satgunam when contacted here today.

However Satgunam said the national squad may not be participating in the the pre-Commonwealth games if the championship was organised before the World Cup in Utrecht, Holland from May 20 to June 1.

"We will discuss the matter with the relevant parties before deciding whether to participate or not in the pre Commonwealth Games," he said.

Satgunam said the purpose of having the pre-games is to test the effectiveness of the facilities in the respective venues which would be used for the Commonwealth Games and not to test the national team's ability. -- BERNAMA

Team ZUL