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Muhyiddin-Commonwealth

PM WANTS GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE FOR SUCCESS OF COMMONWEALTH GAMES

KUALA LUMPUR, May 5 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has ordered large-scale campaigns to increase the involvement of the people in the Kuala Lumpur '98 Commonwealth Games in Sept.

The Prime Minister's directive was given when he chaired a Commonwealth Games Council meeting in the Prime Minister's Department yesterday, said Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Muhyiddin said even though several campaigns have been carried out, the people's involvement and excitement in the Commonwealth Games were not enough.

"Awareness about the Commonwealth Games is high but the keenness to participate is still low. The Prime Minister feels it is still not sufficient and there is still room for improvement," he said at a news conference here today.

Muhyiddin said Dr Mahathir had directed that large-scale campaigns should be carried out aggressively at all levels to ensure the people participate directly or indirectly to make the Games a success.

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.

He said the large-scale campaigns were necessary because the sale of tickets here and overseas have only reached 70,000 against the 1.26 million printed.

"Apparently more needs to be done to sell the tickets. The ticketing agents, Ticketing Express, must look into the marketing, including appointing more agents and making special offers," he said.

Muhyiddin said aggressive marketing measures had to be taken as he was worried the people might be satisfied watching the games on television and not live at the stadiums.

He said sports associations could take the initiative to increase ticket sales while the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) could influence their members to encourage sales in their respective countries.

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 Commonwealth Games a success," he said.

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

"He also referred to the duties of volunteers and wants them to be fully dedicated. He also questioned some people who were more inclined to making profits using the name of Sukom and advised those concerned to identify them," he said.

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

He said the information ministry secretary general also reported about the programmes that were held locally and overseas to promote the game while all technical facilities and personnel for the International

Broadcasting Centre at Angkasapuri have been arranged and would be tested during the pre-Commonwealth Games from July 11 to 19.

Muhyiddin said the Council had also agreed to the presentations for the opening and closing ceremonies, including two unique features which are being kept confidential and would only be revealed during the actual event.

On the haze and water shortage, Muhyiddin said it wasn't discussed because all measures to overcome them had been discussed at committee stage.

Muhyiddin said the Prime Minister had also referred to the preparations of the national athletes and the medal prospects as well as events which will be the focus of the Malaysian contingent.

"We have informed him of our focus and medal estimates ... he reacted satisfactorily but he wants the nation's achievements to be enhanced for a better performance," he said.

Muhyiddin also said an International Olympic Council (IOC) official was carrying out final tests at the Universiti Sains Malaysia Doping Centre in Pulau Pinang and the centre was expected to get accreditation at the end of this month.

-- BERNAMA
AR DSR