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Commonwealth-artistes

PRIORITY FOR LOCAL ARTISTES DURING COMMONWEALTH GAMES

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Local artistes would be given priority during the Commonwealth Games in September and the question of patriotism does not arise if foreign artistes are invited, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

He said the Commonwealth Games Executive Committee which he chairs had not decided whether foreign artistes would be invited and if any were invited, it would only be one or two of them.

"Priority would be given to local artistes. In fact, for the opening of the National Sports Complex (KSN) on July 11, local artistes would be performing," he said at a press conference on the official opening of KSN by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Muhyiddin was commenting on a report that local artistes felt slighted and regretted that Sukom Ninety Eight Berhad had invited several Western singers for the games' closing ceremony.

He said the entertainment programme before the opening ceremony on Sept 11 would be performed by local artistes and the proposal to invite foreign artistes were made only because the event was of international interest and would be watched by foreigners.

"We certainly want to promote Malaysia's image during the games but it's not wrong to give some space for foreign performance. I hope with this statement the question of patriotism will no longer be raised," he said.

On the sponsorship of the Commonwealth Games by brewery company Carlsberg, Muhyiddin said he had asked Sukom executive chairman Jen (Rtd) Tan Sri Hashim Ali to find a solution to the problem.

"It is also good to discuss with Carlsberg first. Since they are bound by agreement, I leave it to Hashim and the Sukom management to settle the matter," he added.

On the official opening of the RM1.2 billion KSN, Muhyiddin said various programmes had been planned and free tickets would be distributed from Sunday at the Merdeka Stadium.

He said Dr Mahathir would also name the venues located within the KSN namely the Main Stadium, Indoor Stadium, Hockey Stadium, Swimming Complex, Squash Stadium, Basketball Stadium as well as the Lawn Bowls Complex at Bukit Kiara.

Muhyiddin said the opening ceremony would enable Sukom and the police to test the technological system, traffic control, security, public transport, communication and technical facilities at the complex.

The Commonwealth pre-Games would be held from July 11 to 19 at the KSN involving athletics, aquatics, squash, men's hockey and gymnastics.

He said spectators could use the LRT system free of charge on the opening night while parking space for cars would be provided at the Technology Park and Selangor Turf Club car parks.

Dr Mahathir is also expected to officially open the Bukit Jalil LRT Station on the same night.

At the opening night, the song "Standing In the Eyes of the World" composed by a renowned international composer specially for Dr Mahathir would be played.

In conjunction with the opening of the KSN, a sports carnival will be held from 9 am involving Go Carts, Roller Blades, five-a-side football, beach volleyball and other events.

-- BERNAMA

AR AO