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Proposal for opening of the Bukit Jalil complex

SPORTS Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin will propose to the Cabinet that the opening ceremony for the National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil coincides with the Pre-Commonwealth Games events on July 11-19.

Athletics, squash and possibly hockey will feature an international cast while aquatics and gymnastics will be national events.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to open the complex which houses the main stadium, hockey stadium, indoor stadium, swimming complex and national squash courts.

The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games proper will also be held in the main stadium and an opening ceremony for the pre-Games will also be on the agenda.

The opening ceremony will be jointly organised by the Ministry and Sukom.

Meanwhile, Sukom executive chairman Jen (Rtd) Tan Sri Hashim Ali said they would mobilise their resources including volunteers, transportation, equipment, technology and ticketing system while a certain number of foreign technical officials would also be invited.

"We will put the whole system to the test during the pre-Games events. I want to see high levels of stress so we can determine our strength and shortcomings before the Games proper," he said.

Hashim said every aspect of the Games which came under Sukom's responsibility would be put to the test including dope screening, security, host broadcasting and if possible, the Games Village.

Sukom and the five sports bodies had agreed to the new date after taking into consideration the World Cup soccer final on July 12, the Asian Track and Field (ATF) championships in Fukuoka on July 19-22 and the Athletics Grand Prix in Europe.

The Asian Squash Championship would be held as part of the pre-Games while the Malaysia AAU would look into the possibility of shifting their Malaysian Open Championships scheduled earlier in May to July.

He said athletics needed three days, squash eight, aquatics six, hockey four and gymnastics six days.

"The main stadium may be ready in May but the whole area surrounding it will still be in a mess. The athletics meet will be moved to July subject to the approval of the MAAU president," he said.

The LRT connection to Bukit Jalil would be operational during that period while Sukom would ask the Road Transport Department (RTD) to allow certain bus companies to run buses for the pre-games to see the effectiveness of public transportation to the sports complex.

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