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## Sukom under scrutiny

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THE pre-Commonwealth Games events to be held on July 11-19 will be a test not just for the venues, equipment and volunteers to be used for the Kuala Lumpur Games but also for Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd.

The Games proper are scheduled to be held on Sept 11-21.

Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that Sukom should put their entire machinery to the test and see how they cope.

"Sukom have also been asked to incorporate other sub-committees into the pre-Games such as security and transport," said Muhyiddin.

"Some of these committees are non-Sukom bodies headed by the Armed Forces Chief and Inspector-General of Police."

Muhyiddin said Sukom could prepare a checklist to contain things like results, timing, volunteers and security.

"Check them from day one to see the shortcomings. This will be better than just doing a post mortem after the pre-games," he said.

Muhyiddin was speaking after the post-Cabinet meeting at his Ministry.

He said though only five sports will be involved in the test run, he expects other sports to organise separate events to test their facilities.

"For example badminton is organising the Malaysian Open and rugby a sevens tournament."

The Open will be at the Kuala Lumpur Badminton Association Stadium in Cheras and the rugby sevens at the Petaling Jaya Stadium, both Games venues.

The pre-Games idea was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the last Commonwealth Games Council meeting. Dr Mahathir is the chairman of the Council.

Muhyiddin also dismissed the idea of using the Malaysia Games in April as a test run rather than organising a special pre-Games event.

"The Malaysia Games have a different philosophy hence it would not be appropriate to use them as a test run for the Commonwealth Games."

On the difficulty in getting Sukom souvenirs which are not readily available in the market, Muhyiddin said Sukom were supposed to have improved on their distribution network.

"I have not got an update from Sukom since the last time they set up a consortium to sell the merchandise after their first effort failed."

The consortium were to have set up outlets, called Sukom Shoppes, nationwide to sell Games souvenirs but it never happened and they ran into financial difficulties. Sukom too ended up losing RM70,000.

Sukom subsequently appointed another consortium comprising several of their licencees to manage the merchandise but progress has been slow.

On the Mines Convention Centre as weightlifting venue, Muhyiddin said he has directed his secretary-general Datuk Ahmad Bakri Shabdin to look into the matter.

"The owner (Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew) of Country Heights promised that in the spirit of Malaysia Incorporated he will charge a reasonable rate. So we'll wait and see."

Mines, who had offered to host weightlifting, had proposed to charge RM43,000 per day for the use of the hall. It would have cost Sukom close to RM500,000 for the 10-day competition.

At the last Games Council meeting it was decided that Sukom and not the Government will pay for the rental of the hall.

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