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Tiny Tuvalu can make it big

Anthony Raj

TUVALU and 10-second Tenaga will help make it the best ever and most memorable Commonwealth Games on Sept 11-21.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday that Tuvalu are the only Commonwealth country yet to confirm their participation.

St Helena were the 68th of the 69 Commonwealth countries to have confirmed their participation recently.

"I've asked Tan Sri Jen (rtd) Hashim Ali (executive chairman of Games organisers Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd) to make the necessary arrangements to get the participation of Tuvalu," said Muhyiddin at a briefing for newspaper editors at his office in Kuala Lumpur.

On the Tenaga connection, Muhyiddin said the national electricity corporation have guaranteed they will restore electricity supply with their generator sets within 10 seconds of a power cut at any of the 26 Games venues.

Not that Tenaga are expecting a power cut for they will have a proactive maintenance crew in every venue but Muhyiddin said that the generator sets are for any eventualities.

Except for merchandising, which Muhyiddin described as "a disappointment", and ticket sales which are "just picking up", other preparations are proceeding smoothly.

On ticket sales, of the over 1.2 million that will be on offer for all events, including the opening and closing ceremonies, Muhyiddin said 70 per cent will be sold locally.

Ticket bookings are less than 100,000 now and Sukom are expecting local sales to pick up once the actual tickets are available next month.

Right now Ticket Express, who are handling sales for Sukom, are taking bookings.

Foreign bookings, which are about 60,000 mainly from Australia and England are for rugby, lawn bowls, cricket and swimming.

The ticket situation is being monitored weekly and Muhyiddin said steps will be taken to boost local sales.

According to Sukom, efforts are being made to encourage student participation as the Education Ministry have already scheduled school holidays during the Games.

Sukom director of Communications Tunku Maziah Mukhtar said they have drawn up some programmes to get students from outside the Klang Valley to attend the Games.

Sukom will be making use of funds from the "One Sen Fun" campaign organised by the New Straits Times and TV3 as well as get corporate sponsors to help buy tickets for the students and other members of the public.

It is aimed at putting back one sen coins into circulation and to help sponsor schoolchildren, senior citizens and former athletes, the disabled, orphans and voluntary workers to watch the Games.

Muhyiddin said that there is already a high level of awareness on the Games but what is needed now is to get the people "excited and to fully support" the event.

To get the people "acquainted" with the Games, Muhyiddin said they will distribute 100,000 tickets for the opening ceremony of the Bukit Jalil Sports Complex on July 13 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir

Mohamad.

(END)