

06 OCT 1999

Sports-Muhyiddin (Asiad)

AVOID MISCONCEPTION OVER INDONS' PULL OUT - MUHYIDDIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- Malaysia must take steps to avoid misconception among Asian nations over Indonesia's decision to pull out from the bid to host the 2006 Asian Games.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said in order to avoid such misunderstanding, the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) and Indonesian National Athletics Union (Koni) should meet to clear the air over certain matters.

"To allay such misconceptions, I have asked the OCM to meet Koni to discuss certain matters which may create any unhappiness among the Asean members and Asian nations".

Muhyiddin Yassin said this after chairing the ministry's post-cabinet meeting here today.

Yesterday the Indonesian media quoted the republic's Youth and Sports Minister Agung Laksono as saying that Indonesia had decided not to bid for the 2006 Asian Games' host job in order to support Malaysia's bid to hold Asia's most prestigious sports showcase.

Agung said the decision was made in last week's Cabinet meeting chaired by President B. J. Habibie.

He said Habibie wanted Indonesia to support Malaysia's bid in order to ensure that an Asean member was given the honour to host the Games.

Habibie had also said that Malaysia, after successfully staging the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games, was in the best position to host the 15th Asiad.

The move was also based on Malaysia's strong support for Indonesia in international diplomatic affairs.

"I am grateful to Indonesia for their decision to pull out as this has made our job easier," said Muhyiddin.

"Following their decision, Koni officials have expressed their intention of coming here to discuss certain matters and I am in the midst of arranging them to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said.

Muhyiddin said despite the increasing support for Malaysia to host the 2006 Asiad, he still subscribed to the original strategies and efforts.

"We will mobilise the efforts as planned but the strategies should be correct and cautious in line with current developments.

"What we have drawn out so far is beginning to show results and the impact of our bid has been felt by the other nations competing for the host job," he said.

With Indonesia pulling out of the race, Malaysia now have to contend with Hong Kong, Qatar, Syria, India and Uzbekistan in order to earn the nod of the 43 Olympic Council of Asia (OSA) affiliates for the right to host the @006 Asian Games.

-- BERNAMA

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