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Bid panel to work out 'prudent' cost

Randhir Singh

THE financial cost of Malaysia's bid for the 2006 Asian Games and 2008 Olympics will be known soon when the bid committee meets to formulate their strategy.

Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that the initial allocation of RM5 million is a conservative figure.

"But we will be prudent and careful in our bid," said Muhyiddin.

He said the Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Malaysian campaign and have directed all Government departments and agencies to support the bid.

He said a nationwide campaign to be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in April will seek the support of Malaysians for the two bids.

Also to be launched in April will be a logo and mascot for the Games.

The launching will coincide with the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) board meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The campaign for support from the rakyat will be on a big scale with the Information Ministry leading the way.

Muhyiddin said the Ministry have turned the Sukom secretariat that was set up six years ago into a secretariat overseeing the bids for the Asian Games and Olympics.

OCM general secretary Sieh Kok Chi said while the Ministry will focus on getting the support of Malaysians, OCM will be targetting the people who will cast the votes.

"It is vital. We have to identify the individuals."

He said national sports associations such as the Football Association of Malaysia, Badminton Association of Malaysia, Table Tennis Association of Malaysia can play a crucial role in the bid campaign.

"Several OCA delegates are also actively involved in soccer, badminton and table-tennis. Our officials can help in the campaign."

For instance, soccer officials from Middle East and South-East Asia are active in OCA. Sieh feels that FAM senior officials can assist in the campaign.

There are 43 members in OCA and OCM will target 30.

Other than Malaysia, the others bidding for the 2006 Asian Games are Uzbekistan, Qatar, Syria and India.

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