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Over 800,000 sign up for walk to give Asian Games bid a boost

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - More than 800,000 participants have registered for the "Walk for Nation" next month in support of Malaysia's bid to host the Asian Games in 2006, said Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Loke Yuen Yow.

Loke said he expected the number to increase dramatically in the next two weeks as students and government employees were expected to sign up.

"We are confident of attracting more than two million for the event to be held in 40 towns and cities. The more the number who sign up, the better.

"It will be the people's message to the Olympic Council of Asia which will decide the host country at the end of next year."

He said this after accepting MBA Life Assurance Bhd's contribution of registration cards and enrolment forms for the event.

He added that Malaysia had proved that it was capable of organising a major sports event when it successfully hosted the Commonwealth Games last year.

The "Walk for Nation" will be held in 291 locations all over the country and distances vary from two kilometres to four kilometres at national, state and district levels.

At the national level, the site will be Taman Tasik Titiwangsa and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to lead the walk.

On the bidding for the Games, Loke said that around RM2 million had already been spent. "I think we have a very strong chance of winning the bid based on our success in hosting the recent Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix."

Malaysia has never hosted the Asian Games and will be challenged by rivals Hong Kong, Qatar, India, Uzbekistan and Syria for the right to host the Games.

Those who are interested in the walk can access www.sports.com/jalan and www.gov.my/jalan.

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