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Sports-Hishammuddin (Asia)

KUALA LUMPUR STILL SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

SEPANG, Nov 13 (Bernama) -- Kuala Lumpur is still in a daze over the failure to secure the host job for the 2006 Asian Games as it believed that it gave the best presentation at the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) general assembly in Pusan, South Korea yesterday.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said he still believed that Kuala Lumpur made the best offer.

"I am very sad and disappointed as until this very day I strongly believe that in terms of bid, facilities, spirit and commitment, we have the best," he told reporters at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) after returning from Seoul today.

Hishammuddin who is the Kuala Lumpur Asian Games 2006 Bid Committee joint chairman said he was still searching for answers on where the bid had gone wrong and was willing to listen to views showing where they had gone wrong.

Yesterday in Pusan, Doha won the right to hold the 15th Asian Games in 2006 after receiving 22 votes as against Kuala Lumpur's 13 and Hong Kong, six. In the first round of voting, Doha bagged 20 with Kuala Lumpur (13), Hong Kong (six) and New Delhi (two).

"However the decision has been made and we have to accept it. At present there are no other procedures or methods which allow us to dispute it," he said.

Hishammuddin said the Kuala Lumpur bid documents will not be reviewed as he felt it was the best ever offered by any city bidding for the Asiad.

"In this past few months I have focused much on our bid to host the Asiad and I think it is not necessary to review it as I myself was directly involved in preparing (documents).

"If we are given another chance to make a bid, I think we will not amend anything in our bid documents...we will not change our presentation made in Pusan and nothing else apart from what we offer to the OCA in Pusan," he said.

He said if what was offered by Kuala Lumpur was not good enough, then it was the OCA who were the ones who actually lost and the rejection of Kuala Lumpur's bid was a challenge to the nation to prove itself in the future.

Hishammuddin said before leaving for Pusan, he had briefed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on issues which might happen at the OCA general assembly.

"I will bring (issues) to the Cabinet's and Prime Minister's attention. His response was very encouraging and I am very sad with the outcome," he said.

Hishammuddin said the SEA Games next year in Kuala Lumpur will prove to the OCA delegates of Malaysia's ability in organising international level sports carnival.

Asked on whether Kuala Lumpur is still interested in making bids to host Asian Games in the future including the 2010 Asiad, Hishammuddin said the possibility was none.

"If that was the way how it turned out, then I cannot think once or twice but ten times," he said.

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In another development, Hishammuddin said he would not step down as the Youth and Sports Minister following calls from the opposition after Kuala Lumpur failed to land the host job for the Asiad 2006.

Hishammuddin however said he was prepared to do so if asked by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"If it was clearly my fault and if the Prime Minister ask me to step down, then I have no problems in doing so.

"But I will not resign due to pressure from the opposition," he said.

He said the opposition should look into other more pressing issues instead of using the Kuala Lumpur Asian Games bid failure as a gimmick.

-- BERNAMA

HRS AR ZUL