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Sports-OCA

MALAYSIA'S FACILITIES AMONG THE BEST IN ASIA, SAY OCA

PUTRAJAYA, July 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia have one of the finest sports facilities in Asia and her experience in hosting the 1998 Commonwealth Games will have an impact on Kuala Lumpur's bid to host the 2006 Asian Games, according to the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) today.

The OCA Evaluation Committee, who concluded a two-day fact-finding mission here, said they were satisfied with Kuala Lumpur's proposals and facilities to host the Games.

"We have comprehensive meetings with the Youth and Sports Ministry, the local city administration and the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM), and we are satisfied with the answers," said delegation leader Muhammad Latif Butt.

The four-member delegation unanimously described their visit as fruitful and were honoured to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

They paid a courtesy call on Dr Mahathir at his office in Putrajaya before rounding up their visit with a final meeting at the Renaissance Palm Garden Hotel, IOI Resort, here.

Asked whether the hosting of the 1998 Commonwealth Games would have any bearing on Kuala Lumpur's bid, Latif said: "Naturally it will have an effect for the job."

Latif, who is OCA vice-president, said they were satisfied with their evaluation on Kuala Lumpur, saying what was in Kuala Lumpur's bid document to OCA was true.

The other three members in the inspection team are OCA treasurer Santiparb Tejavanija, sports committee chairman Dr Muwaffak Fawaz and international relations manager Vinod Tiwari.

Refusing to compare facilities here with those in two other bid cities, Doha (Qatar) and New Delhi (India), which the team had inspected earlier, Latif said the delegation would submit their findings to the OCA executive board.

"We are not the one to decide who will host the Games but the delegates in the OCA family. We will put our findings before the executive board," he said.

The team will head for Hong Kong, the fourth bidding city, tomorrow for a similar inspection.

Pointing to Santiparb, who was seated next to him, Latif said that even the Thai, the technical man in the delegation, was satisfied with his findings.

"Our job is to present the factual findings on all the bid cities to the OCA executive board. We are happy to meet the Prime Minister and that shows the government is behind Kuala Lumpur's aspiration to host the Games...that is important," he said.

Asked whether the bid cities would be shortlisted before the OCA General Assembly pick the winner on Nov 12 in Pusan City, South Korea, Latif said it would be up to the executive board.

The executive board will meet in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Aug 26-28, during which the four bid cities would be requested to make presentations.

-- BERNAMA

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