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UNWANTED GUESTS FROM HONG KONG SHOCK KUALA LUMPUR

By: Asan Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR, July 17 (Bernama) -- Not only was Kuala Lumpur scrutinised by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) on the facilities for the 2006 Asian Games but also by a Hong Kong television station when OCA members visited the facilities on the first day of inspection here today.

Members of the Kuala Lumpur 2006 Bid Committee were taken by surprise and were shocked to see a Hong Kong Television Cable Station crew filming the facilities when a four-member OCA Evaluation Committee were briefed by local officials.

The "unwanted" recording of such facilities by a rival bidder did not go down well with Malaysian officials when the Hong Kong television cameraman and a broadcast journalist tailed the delegation.

However, Malaysian officials did not stop the television crew from joining the tour and wondered what could be the motive behind such recording.

The Hong Kong "guests" were both males in their mid-thirties and were clad in shorts and T-shirts, carrying a camera and even interviewed a member of the OCA Sports Committee, Dr Muwaffak Fawaz.

Ministry of Youth and Sports Secretary-General, Datuk Mahamad Zabri Min, who briefed the OCA committee, said Kuala Lumpur would monitor the Hong Kong station through the Malaysian mission there.

"Although our doors are open for anyone to come and see our facilities....we would like to see what the station produces later. If the station comes out with negative reports, we will protest to OCA," he said.

Hong Kong is among Kuala Lumpur's rivals to host the 2006 Asian Games. The other two cities are Doha (Qatar) and New Delhi (India).

The four-member OCA delegation arrived here from New Delhi today to inspect Kuala Lumpur's facilities and services.

The delegation, led by OCA vice-president Muhammad Latif Butt, had a field day visiting the National Sports Complex and other facilities in the Klang Valley, including the proposed Games Village at Universiti Putra Malaysia in Serdang.

"If the Hong Kong television station comes up with good reports about Kuala Lumpur, then it would be free promotion for us. I wonder what their motives are in filming our facilities at this time," he asked.

Earlier, the evaluation committee were briefed by members of the Kuala Lumpur 2006 Bid Committee on Malaysia's preparation which includes the setting-up of the games village, media centre, hospitality and medical facilities.

From their reaction, the evaluation committee were impressed but they refused to give any comment.

"We are here to evaluate not to tell the bidding committee what are the do's and don'ts," said Muwaffak when asked by reporters after the briefing.

Every bidding city have their own facilities and the report of the evaluation committee would be submitted to the OCA Executive Board which would meet in Tashkent on Aug 27 and 28, he said.

Tomorrow the evaluation committee will inspect Malaysia's modern and reliable transportation system, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) and they are scheduled to take a ride on the LRT from the Bukit Jalil station to Bandar Tun Razak station.

From there they will visit Kuala Lumpur City Hall's sports facilities in Bandar Tun Razak before proceeding to Bukit Kiara to inspect the Lawn Bowls venue and Juara Stadium.

Later in the afternoon, they are scheduled to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Putrajaya.

-- BERNAMA

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