

25 MAR 2002  
Sports-Sukma  
MORE THAN 6,000 ATHLETES FOR SUKMA IN SABAH

KUALA LUMPUR, March 25 (Bernama) -- More than 6,000 athletes from 20 contingents, including Australia's Northern Territory and Brunei, will be competing in the 9th Malaysia Games (Sukma) to be held in Sabah this September.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said Northern Territory, who would be making their debut, and Brunei would be participating at the invitation of the hosts.

A total of 1,075 medals will be up for grabs in the games featuring 27 sports.

"However, the Australian Northern Territory's participation is limited to 50 athletes in five sports -- golf, athletics, sailing, cycling and tenpin bowling," he told reporters after chairing Sukma's main organising committee meeting here today.

He said Brunei, who have participated in several Sukma before, were allowed to compete in all the 27 sports.

The games proper will be held from Sept 5 to 14 but certain team events will begin on Sept 2. Some 3,000 technical officials and 2,000 volunteers will be involved in the games.

Hishammuddin said 18 venues would be used for the biennial games, with the Likas Sports Complex as the main venue hosting 11 sports.

Work to upgrade the venues was 67 percent complete and the facilities were expected to be ready for trial runs in June, he said.

He said all competition venues and the media centre in Likas would be equipped with computers and an information system network to ensure speedy delivery of results.

The Sukma torch run will begin on Aug 1 when Sabah receives the flame from the previous hosts, Penang, at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport.

The torch would be taken to all the 24 districts in Sabah so that people throughout the state could feel the spirit of the games, he said.

The games will be opened by Sabah Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai and closed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) campus will serve as the games village.

-- BERNAMA  
AZ MFJ YBY