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High expectations at Games

Athletes going through systematic training



The highlight: Khaled with (from left) Omar, Omar Abdul Rahman and Dr Saharudin holding a poster on the Asean University Games.

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HOSTS Malaysia will be aiming to be more than gracious organisers of the 14th Asean University Games to be held in Kuala Lumpur from Dec 11 to 21.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said they were preparing their athletes through a careful selection process and systematic training to vie for honours at the Games.

"Considering the home ground advantage, we have high expectations," he added.

More than 7,000 participants including athletes and officials from 11 countries in the region are expected to be in the fray.

And they will be battling for 207 gold medals at stake in 21 sports.

The ministry has also formed three separate committees - main, execution and working - to spearhead the Games organisation structure.

Malaysian Universities Sports Council (MASUM) chairman Associate Professor Dr Omar Osman, Higher Education Ministry deputy secretary general (management) Omar Abdul Rahman and Higher Education Ministry sports division secretary Dr Saharudin Ismail were also present at the committee meeting held recently.

»We want our top national athletes to strive for excellence in sports without compromising on attaining their tertiary qualifications«

DATUK SERI MOHAMED KHALED NORDIN

The organisers will be unveiling the official mascot, logo, website, theme song, working procedure manual and countdown during the official launch of the Games held simultaneously with the Asean University Sports Council meeting on June 10.

Meanwhile, the ministry will be assessing their sports development policy to instil sports culture among the students in the tertiary institutions with a workshop in Malacca.

"We want our top national athletes to strive for excellence in sports without compromising on attaining their tertiary qualifications. They should not be forced to choose between studies and sports. We will be looking into their welfare to encourage them to combine studies and sports at the same time," said Khaled.

So far, seven athletes pursuing their tertiary education at public universities have qualified for the upcoming Olympics in Beijing.

They are Roslinda Samsu (pole vault), Chew Chee Chan and Elaine Teoh (taekwondo), Cheng Chu Sian and Wan Mohd Khalmizam Wan Abd Aziz (archery) and Leong Mun Yee and Rosharisham Roslan (diving).

Among other events on the MASUM competition calendar are the two series of MASUM Games.

The opening leg will commence at Universiti Malaya (May 13-17) followed by the second leg at Uni-

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versiti Malaysia Sabah (May 21-27).

"As a build up towards the Asean University Games, our athletes will also be given the opportunity to gauge their skills against their counterparts from Thailand and Indonesia," added Khaled.

Universiti Putra Malaysia will be hosting the Malaysia-Thailand Games from July 24 to 27 while the Malaysia-Indonesia Games will be held at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka between Aug 21 and 24.