

# UPM confident despite challenge

**DEFENDING** champions Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) are anticipating much tougher competition this year but remain confident they have what it takes to retain the overall title at the Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning Games (Sukipt) which kicked-off with the opening ceremony in Shah Alam yesterday.

Sports Division head Hamzah Ismail said UPM have set a target of at

least 46 gold at the second edition of the biennial Games which is set to see over 8,000 athletes from 107 higher education institutions competing.

“The inaugural edition (2012) caught a lot of universities off guard and as a result their preparation for the event may not have been what they would have liked,” said Hamzah.

“It is going to be a different story this time as the majority of universities have been gearing up for this since the last Games and the level of competition is going to be much different.

“Our aim is to win at least 46 gold medals and once again we will look to do well in sports such as swimming, athletics and karate in addition to team sports like hockey.

“It is not impossible for



**Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin at the Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning Games opening ceremony in Shah Alam yesterday. Pic by Farizul Hafiz Awang**

us to defend our title as we have the quality but our athletes must compete to their full potential and cannot afford to take anything for granted.”

Hamzah added that he does not believe the addition of eight new sports this year will threaten their title hopes and listed home-ground advantage for Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and a strengthened athletics programme by Universiti

Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) as factors that could affect the outcome of the Games.

UiTM and UniMAP finished second and third respectively behind UPM two years ago.

“UiTM have a huge base of athletes (across their various campuses) nationwide to call upon which makes them dangerous. They will also be hosting the majority of

events and with home support we expect them to be our main rivals again.

“UniMAP have an excellent development programme and will likely be a stronger side, especially in athletics.”

The eight sports included for this year are pencak silat, squash, fencing, judo, petanque, woodball, softball and lawn bowls. **By Fadhli Ishak**

www.sukipt.com.my

**SUKIPT 2014**

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**UiTM SHAH ALAM**

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