

WE HAVE TO TWEAK TRANSPORT FOR PARALYMPIANS — FATIMAH

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KUCHING: Transportation logistics remain as one of the main challenges faced by Sarawak as host of the 18th Malaysian Paralympics scheduled for Aug 1-7.

The 18th Malaysian Paralympics committee chairperson Datuk Fatimah Abdullah admitted that disabled-friendly transportation facilities are limited in the state, thus becoming a significant problem for Sarawak as the host.

“Based on our experience at the 17th Malaysian Paralympics held in Perlis in 2014, we found that there were disabled-friendly buses to shuttle the Paralympians back and forth from event venues. However, over here, there is no such bus transportation, and it is impossible for us to bring those (special) buses from West Malaysia to Sarawak to be used during the Paralympics. However, we will think of a way to overcome this problem to ensure a smooth Paralympics and a safe experience for our paralympians,” Fatimah said at a press conference after a meeting at her office in Masja here on Thursday.

Aside from the need to tailor transportation facilities for special needs, the committee was also working hard to ensure that accommodation is suitable for the paralympians.

University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), Fatimah said, was chosen as the sports village with a committee formed to analyse any aspects that needed modification of upgrading, especially toilets, with the permission of Unimas.

“Even though the facilities provided such as transportation and accommodation are not as ideal, but we will ensure it is comfortable and user-friendly for our athletes,” said Fatimah, who is also Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister.

The 18th Malaysian Paralympics technical committee, led by Dr Ong Kong Swee, was scheduled to visit all the sports venues with other committee members yesterday, the visits to ensure all sporting locations have been readied to perfection for competition for the duration of the Paralympics.