Teo named Mayor of Games Village

By Leonard Lim

He has been intimately involved with the Youth Olympic Games from the start, and Senior Parliamentary Secretary (Community Development, Youth and Sports, and Transport) Teo Ser Luck will play another integral role when athletes from around the globe arrive for the event.

He will be the Mayor of the Games’ nerve centre, the YOG Village at Nanyang Technological University.

The 55-ha site will be where the athletes will eat, interact, play and sleep — essentially all their daily activities when they are not competing.

Mr Teo will be assisted by two deputies: former sprinter C. Kunalan and ex-swimmer Joscelin Yeo, themselves former Olympians.

This was announced by MCYS Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan in a visit to the Village yesterday, when he was updated on the venue’s preparations for the Aug 14–26 Games.

The role of Mr Teo and his deputies will be to ensure that the athletes and officials have a memorable stay and to serve as intermediaries between the organisers and visitors if problems arise.

“The Village will be the heart of the Games,” said Mr Teo, who has worked closely with the Games’ organising committee chairman Ng Ser Miang since Singapore considered bidding for the YOG in 2007.

“We hope to enrich the athletes’ experiences, ensure their well-being and leave a legacy behind for NTU and Singapore after the Games.”

A World Cultural Village will be set up within the grounds to showcase the history and cultures of the participating national Olympic committees.

There will also be daily performances, concerts and forums to discuss issues like the dangers of doping.

NTU was selected as the site of the Village in 2008, after the spiralling cost of building materials meant delays to the original venue, the upcoming 10ha University Town in Clementi.

Minor upgrading works such as the installing of air-conditioners in bedrooms have been completed and organisers are now putting up overlays like technology cables and signs.

After touring the venue, Dr Balakrishnan said: “If you think in terms of other Villages before a major sporting event, this is way ahead.

“In most places, if you go to a Village at this stage, two months before, you’ll see a construction site. Here, we have an already established site which we are now renovating.”

Turning to the appointment of the Mayor and Deputy Mayors, he added: “The three of them will form a formidable team, with the right balance of youth, and experience, sports, sports administration.

“They will be the face of Singapore to the athletes and officials.”