KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) contingent will be hoping to better their outing at this year's Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning Games (SUKIPT), which will be held at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Skudai in Johor from January 25.

They will be spearheaded by 42 athletes and officials to the Games that is scheduled to end on February 5.

UMS will be competing in nine sporting events namely taekwondo, track and field, badminton, tenpin bowling, petanque, lawn bowls, karate, silat and beach volleyball.

The varsity's deputy vice chancellor (student affairs), Associate Professor Dr Ismail Ali, representing Vice Chancellor Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, graced the flag handing over ceremony held yesterday. Speaking at the function Ismail reminded the athletes to compete with high fighting spirit and sportsmanship.

"We hope to achieve our six-gold medal target and to finish in the top 10 overall, which will improve our show last time out," said Ismail, adding that at the second edition of the Games in 2014, UMS finished 11th overall among 114 participating contingents.

For the record, the Games will be competed by more than 120 institutions, including private universities, private institutions, community colleges, teacher's institutions, as well as matriculation colleges.