

18/07/2001

All's well as Asean Voyage of Friendship 2001 leaves for Jakarta

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Asean Voyage of Friendship 2001, launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Saturday, took off from the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Sungai Besi for Jakarta today.

Two light aircraft, a Zodiac CH601 HD piloted by Capt Mohamed Sabri Baharom and Capt Abdul Aziz Ahmad, and a MD3-160 Aero Tiga piloted by Major Zainal Abidin Aidid Omar Azaddin and trainee Mansor Sarip, left the base at noon.

The two aircraft were shepherded by an Antonov AN38-100 that departed at the same time from Terminal 3 of the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang.

The Antonov carried 23 passengers that included 11 junior trainee pilots from the Rakan Muda programme and officials from the Youth and Sports Ministry, as well as aircraft spares.

Special envoy for the voyage, Abdul Latif Endot, said they originally planned to fly to Kuching in Sarawak, Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore but had to change their course due to bad weather along the Pontianak range of Kalimantan and a typhoon build-up near Manila.

The new route now covers Jakarta via Batam Island, Pangkal Pinang in Pulau Bangka, Palembang (all in Indonesia) and Singapore before returning home.

Another team is being planned to cover the Brunei and Philippines sector, he said.

Tomorrow in Jakarta, Abdul Latif is scheduled to present an invitation scroll on behalf of Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein to his Indonesian counterpart and the people of Indonesia to attend the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games on Sept 8 to 17.

Abdul Latif, who is Hishammuddin's senior private secretary, had in April this year flown in a Zodiac across the South China Sea to carry the Sea Games torch.

"Part of the voyage is to promote Asean goodwill and enhance co-operation among youths of the 10 countries," said Abdul Latif.

(END)