

11 AUG 2001

Planes-course

"USAGI" FORCES RAKAN MUDA PLANES TO CHANGE COURSE

By: Rozaini Ahmad

VIENTIANE, Aug 11 (Bernama) -- The tropical storm Usagi, which is expected to hit Vietnam in 48 hours, will force two Rakan Muda planes taking part in the Asean Goodwill Flight 2001 to change their flight schedule and course.

Instead of heading for Hanoi tomorrow, the two Zodiac 9M-ERM light planes will instead change course for Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Tuesday.

Expedition manager Abdul Latiff Endot said the strong winds and heavy rains associated with Usagi would be too dangerous for the two light planes.

"But the escort plane CN235 carrying seven Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) personnel, eight journalists and other members of the expedition will head for Hanoi tomorrow," he told reporters here today.

He said other expedition members would take part in the programme lined up in Hanoi, including the presentation of invitation letter to the 21st SEA Games to the Vietnamese government on Monday before departing for Phnom Penh the following day.

The two planes however would try to go to Hanoi together with the CN235, weather permitting or else they would depart from here straight to Phnom Penh on Tuesday, said Latiff, who is also the senior private secretary to Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein.

The heavy rains here since yesterday had also disrupted the plan by the Rakan Muda participants to fly over this capital city of Laos.

The Asean Goodwill Flight Expedition 2001 involves 17 days of flight covering over 4,000 nautical miles through Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand.

The expedition, entering its seventh day today, is to officially invite Asean countries to take part in the SEA Games hosted by Malaysia in September.

The expedition was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Sungei Besi RMAF base on July 14.

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