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SEA-Agong

YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG TO OPEN 21ST SEA GAMES

By: D.Arul Rajoo

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah will open the 21st SEA Games at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here on Saturday, marking the start of the first Games of the new millennium.

The King is expected to arrive at the stadium at 8.10pm with Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and wife, and Cabinet ministers are also expected to attend the opening.

Ministers and dignitaries from the nine foreign participating countries as well foreign diplomats will also be at the ceremony.

The opening will start with a martial arts presentation and parachute jump, followed by a march-past by the 10 contingents and then the South East Asia Games Federation (SEAGF) flag.

SEAGF president Tunku Imran Tuanku Ja'afar, who is also the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) president, will deliver his speech before Organising Committee chairman Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, who is Youth and Sports Minister, makes his address.

The King is expected to officially declare open the Games at 9.35pm.

The ceremony will continue with the SEA Games torch, which has been taken round the country for the past few months, arriving at the stadium.

It will be carried by current and former Malaysian athletes as well as those from the nine other countries.

After the oath-taking by athletes, officials and technical delegates, the 10 chefs-de-mission will be introduced to the King.

It will be followed by the staging of "Human Formation" and a fireworks display.

There will also be performances by popular local artistes, among them Hattan, Noraniza Idris, Liza Hanim, and the Malaysian Army's Cultural Troupe.

A total of 3,512 athletes from Malaysia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam will be vying for 391 gold, 391 silver and 501 bronze medals in the Games which end on Sept 17.

-- BERNAMA

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