

CLOSED SINCE 2016

STADIUM MERDEKA TO REOPEN NEXT YEAR

**Sports, heritage and lifestyle activities
to be held at iconic site**

KUALA LUMPUR

STADIUM Merdeka, one of the country's most well-known landmarks, is expected to reopen its doors to the public by the first quarter of 2024 after being closed since 2016.

Various activities ranging from sports, heritage and lifestyle have been lined up for visitors when the 20,000-seater stadium starts operating just beside the world's second tallest tower, the Merdeka 118.

PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn Bhd (PMVSB) chief executive officer Tengku Datuk Ab Aziz

Tengku Mahmud said: "A stadium with a unifying and inclusive theme was what the first prime minister, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, had intended Stadium Merdeka to be." It would be made available to the public, schools and clubs to carry out their sport activities, he said after a tour of the stadium.

Tengku Ab Aziz said PMVSB also intended to organise heritage walks and guided tours for visitors daily to promote the history of the site of Malaysia's independence declaration in 1957.

He added that collaborations with lifestyle and fitness brands for monthly runs, yoga, tai chi or

outdoor spin would also bring untapped potential attractions to Stadium Merdeka.

Annual Merdeka-themed celebrations via joint activities with existing neighbours are also planned in the hope of activating the stadium and to benefit the surrounding community.

"We are also looking into offering affordable food and beverage pop-ups or cafes."

Stadium Merdeka was considered the Federation of Malaya's engineering marvel when it was built in 1956. It was completed within a year to host the historical moment when Tunku Abdul Rahman declared the country's independence on Aug 31, 1957, followed by the formation of Malaysia on Sept 16, 1963.

PMVSB established the Merdeka Heritage Trust in 2006 to re-



The historic Stadium Merdeka was considered the Federation of Malaya's engineering marvel when it was built in 1956. FILE PIC

store, preserve and manage Stadium Merdeka, which included the removal of seating terraces for a larger seating capacity of 45,000 seats built for the 1989 SEA Games.

Upon the completion of the Merdeka 118 Tower, visitors from there will have access to Stadium Merdeka, as well as the newly built Masjid Merdeka, Merdeka Boulevard and Merdeka Textile Museum, all located close to the stadium's main entrance.

"The Merdeka 118 Precinct will be a key destination for Malaysians and international visitors."

For sports fans, Stadium

Merdeka is definitely a memorable venue — having been Hari-mau Malaya's strong fort and hosted multiple Pestabola Merdeka and football matches.

It has also seen the "big boys" like Japan and South Korea compete as well as the historic boxing bout between "The Greatest" Muhammad Ali and Joe Bugner in 1975.

In the music scene, the stadium had witnessed a number of concerts by world famous artistes, including Michael Jackson, Linkin Park, Mariah Carey, Avril Lavigne, Justin Bieber and Jennifer Lopez. **Bernama**