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RP Team: Jakarta Arrivals

By : Clarito Samson

JAKARTA –With 72 hours left in the countdown, 61 Filipino athletes and officials from five sports disciplines are arriving today for the 26th Southeast Asian Games.

Biggest group is the 27-man taekwondo contingent composed of 17 athletes, five coaches, four technical officials and one team manager.

Except for the country's three bets in paragliding who will fly directly to Jakarta via the national flag carrier, the rest of the athletes and officials will have a layover in Singapore.

Also set to arrive today are Diego Lorenzo and Michelle Barrera – two of the country's bets in equestrian – alongside their team manager, Asian Games gold medallist Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, the 12-man rowing team, 9-man team of doctors, masseurs and physical therapists, and three technical officials from karate-do.

Deputy Chief of Mission Julian Camacho said that the Philippine secretariat is moving heaven and earth to secure the accommodations for all members of the contingent to avoid displacement which he heard dampened the arrival of team Malaysia.

“We are working double time para masigurado yung titirahan ng mga atleta natin,” said Camacho. “Napakagulo nito, imagine yung taga- Malaysia na nakausap ko, sabi niya, tatlong hotel ang pinuntahan nila at palaging bigo sila.”

Taekwondo, which is one of the biggest sources of medals with 21, will have its technical meeting right on Nov. 11, with the actual hostilities to start the day after and will last until Nov. 15.

The rowers, led by SEA Games gold medallists Benjamin Tolentino and Jose Rodriguez, will test the waters off Cipule Lake in Purwakarta before plunging into action on Nov 14-17.

The 38-year old Tolentino, veteran of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, will try his luck in his favorite event, men's single sculls.

The hostilities in equestrian will start on Nov. 15 at the Arthayasa Stable Club in Depok town. Six gold medals are staked in the seven day tournament.

Cycling, which offers 18 in gold medals in track, road race, mountain bike and BMX events, will take place in four separate venues.

Track events will be at the velodrome in Rawamangun, road race in Subang, West Java, while mountain bike is in Gunung Pancar, Sentul City and BMX at Pantai Bende in a tourist destination called Ancol.

RP Team: Palembang Arrivals

By : Clarito Samson

Palembang—Komodo mascots Modo and Modi had their hands full today as competitors, officials and technical delegates arrived in droves in this erstwhile quiet city for the 26th Southeast Asian Games.

Three days before the formal opening at the newly-constructed track-football stadium inside a 320-hectare facility in the Jakabaring district here, 147 Filipino athletes competing in 10 sports planed in between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Athletes and officials in swimming (14), shooting (17), fin swimming (7) waterski (3) and speak taka (9) will all be billeted at the athletes village in Jakabaring while water polo (17), sport climbing (6) men and women softball (44) chess (16) and billiards (16) will stay in various hotels within the city roughly 15 minutes away from their venue of competition.

“We are happy that despite the inexperience of the organizers here, our accommodation problems had been sorted out thanks to the help of the Filipino crew working here for them,” said Deputy Chief of Mission Romeo Magat.

Philippine Olympic Committee President Jose Cojuangco Jr and other ranking officials of the Philippine delegation are expected on November 10, the day before the formal opening rites that will be attended by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Organizing Committee Chairman Rita Subowo.

A total of 13 more teams are expected in the coming days including beach volleyball, athletics, wrestling, petanque, diving, bridge, artistic and rhythmic gymnastics, baseball, tennis, boxing, soft tennis and weightlifting.

Organizers have announced that only a limited number per delegation (a total of 400 athletes and officials for the Philippines) can join the opening day parade, an event that will certainly draw a lot of prayers considering that November is a rainy month for Indonesia.

Governor Alex Noerdin, the chief architect of the Palembang hosting, has assembled a simple yet colourful program on November 11 and has dressed up the legendary Ampera bridge that connects Jakabaring district to the heart of the former kingdom.

President Yudhoyono is expected to arrive in Palembang at around 7 p.m. for the three-hour long ceremony which will include a number from Filipino entertainer KC Concepcion who will sing “Together We Will Shine” with Indonesian Agnes Monica and Malaysia Jacklyn Victor.