

Bigest-ever SAF Games contingent Officials coy about gold hopes

Sports Reporter

A 195-strong Bangladesh contingent, including 135 athletes and competitors, will leave for Colombo either on December 18 or 20 to take part in the fifth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games scheduled for the Sri Lankan capital December 22-31.

This will be the largest ever contingent to represent Bangladesh in any international sporting meet abroad.

Among the 195 are 36 team officials including 19 coaches, 15 team managers and assistants, two doctors and 24 others drawn from different sports organisations, representatives of the Sports Ministry, the National Sports Council (NSC), the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) and a team of eight mediamen travelling at government expense.

The jamboree will cost the national exchequer around one crore taka, which is nearly seven lakh taka more than the cost of Bangladesh's participation in the fourth biennial regional Games held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 1989.

Competitors from all seven SAARC countries — Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives — will be taking part in the Games which will feature competition in ten disciplines. These are athlet-

ics, football, volleyball, boxing, basketball, shooting, tennis, table tennis, wrestling, swimming and the weight-lifting.

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The Ministry is also trying to arrange live telecast and broadcast of the major events involving Bangladesh direct

from Sri Lanka, especially the Bangladesh-India football match.

He also said that the government has decided to reward every gold winning athlete with a cash prize of Taka one lakh.

"Pancha", a baby elephant, is the mascot for the Games.

The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games will be held on December 22 and 31 respectively at the Sugathadasa Stadium.

No competition will be held on December 25, Christmas Day.

The football matches will be played at the Sugathadasa Stadium from December 22 to 29 with rest days on December 23 and 27.

The athletics events will also be held at the Sugathadasa Stadium from December 23 to 28 without any break.

Swimming competitions will take place at the Sugathadasa Complex swimming pool from December 23 to 28.

The shooting contests will take place between December 24 to 27 at the Wilsara Range and the Panagoda Range.

Volleyball matches will be played at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium from December 22 to 30 with a rest day on December 29.

Boxing bouts will be at the Colombo University Gymnasium from December 23



State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeque Hossain addressing a press conference in connection with Bangladesh's participation in the forthcoming fifth SAF Games in Colombo at the NSC conference room yesterday. Maj(retd) Qamrul Islam, MP, chef-de-mission of the Bangladesh contingent, is at right.

—Star photo

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The venue for the basketball competition will be the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium from December 22 to 28.

Weightlifting events will be held between December 26 to 29 at the Kelaniya University Gymnasium.

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