

# No dolphins at Marine Life Park opening

BY ADRIAN LIM

RESORTS World Sentosa is set for a grand opening on Dec 7, as it puts the finishing touches on its second anchor attraction – the Marine Life Park.

But don't expect the 25 dolphins – caught in waters off the Solomon Islands, near Papua New Guinea – which have been a point of contention for animal-rights activists, to be there then.

Resorts World said at a media briefing yesterday that the arrival dates of the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins have not been firmed up yet. The mammals are being held in Subic Bay in the Philippines.

The dolphins are to be part of a series of immersive programmes beginning next year, to be held at the park's Adventure Cove Waterpark.

As part of the programmes, visitors will be able to feed and

interact with the dolphins, and learn more about their anatomy.

The programmes are “meant to be rolled out progressively after the opening of the park to ease operations”, Mr Robin Goh, assistant director of communications at Resorts World, told *my paper*.

Still, visitors will have much to look forward to at the Marine Life Park – which comprises the “wet” Adventure Cove Waterpark and a “dry” South-east Asia Aquarium (SEA Aquarium).

Besides thrilling rides, the former will feature Rainbow Reef, where visitors can snorkel alongside some 20,000 fishes.

The SEA Aquarium will boast the world's largest viewing panel, although Resorts World did not provide further details.

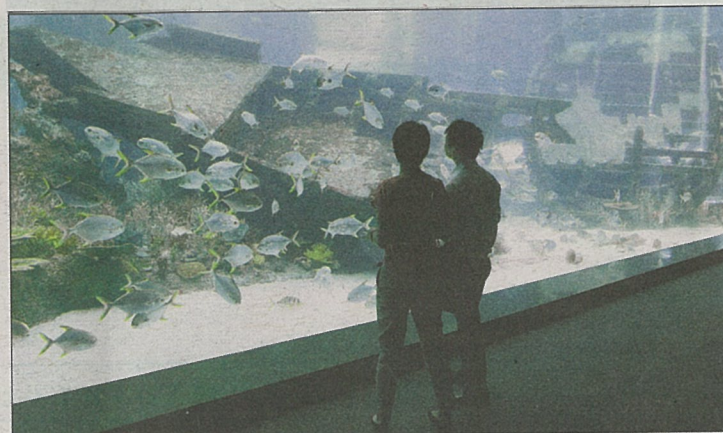
It will showcase marine animals like manta rays and hammerhead sharks.

The park is billed as the world's largest oceanarium, with more than 60 million litres

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**DECEMBER DEBUT:** The bottlenose dolphins' arrival has not been firmed up, but visitors to the park will be able to view its South-east Asia Aquarium. (PHOTOS: NUS, LIANHE ZAOBAO)



**NATURE DRAW:** Visitors will be able to snorkel alongside some 20,000 fishes at Rainbow Reef. (PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO)

## Another milestone for Resorts World Sentosa

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of water, and 100,000 marine animals from over 800 species.

Marine Life Park's completion marks another milestone for Resorts World, which opened for business in January 2010. In March that year, it opened its first anchor attraction, the Universal Studios Singapore theme park.

With the upcoming grand opening, Resorts World has its

sights set on extending its average guest-stay duration from the current three days to four days next year. It is also targeting to attract more than 16 million visitors next year, up from 30 million visitors recorded in its first two years.

British soprano Sarah Brightman, who will be accompanied by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, is set to perform at the grand opening.

Mr Louis Ng, executive director of Animal Concerns Research and Education Society, said the Marine Life Park can serve as an educational tool, but it can do without the dolphins. He pointed out that a threat facing the specific dolphin species comes from being captured live for oceanarium display.

Mr Ng said: “It's going to be a contradiction if Resorts World says it is here to educate the public about dolphin protection.”

Mr Biswajit Guha, the park's director, said: “There is very little baseline data about Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins in the