

## Medal hopes high for new events at the Asiad

Cheering and clapping are usually welcomed and encouraged in sporting events. But there will be one exception at the 16th Asian Games. Go, or “baduk” in Korean, is among the five new events, including cricket, sports dance, dragon boat racing and roller sports, that have been added to the Guangzhou Asian Games. The competition venue will be almost silent when players are placing tiny black and white stones on a board with 361 crosses. Coaches can't communicate with or even stay by the players during the game. There will be no breaks or half-time. Three gold medals are up for grabs in the newly added Asiad game — men's and women's team events and also mixed doubles. And the Republic of Korea is aiming to haul two gold medals at the event.

— THE KOREA HERALD

## Formidable China threatens to spike

Thailand's beach volleyball players have their work cut out: regain the glorious heights they reached at 1998's Asian Games when the sport was first introduced at the Asiad.

Twelve years ago, Manatsanan Pangka and Rattanaporn Arlaisuk made Thailand proud in the Bangkok Asian Games when they thrashed Japan in the final to capture the gold medal. Since then, no Thai beach volleyball player has stepped onto a Games podium.

Nevertheless, Thai players have continued to shine at the regional level. Veteran Kamoltip Kulna, who played in the Bangkok Games, partnering Yupa Phokrongploy, won the Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) gold in Laos. The pairing has been pretty impressive lately, winning two straight tournaments this month — the Indonesia Open Asia-Pacific Beach Volleyball Tour and the Asia-Pacific Indonesia Open Championship — powering past teammates Jarunee Sannok and Usa Tenpaksee in the finals.

But the Jarunee-Usa partnership is still a force to be reckoned with. They won the 2008 Asian Beach Games in Bali after stunning Kamoltip Yupa in an all-Thai clash. The two Thai duos are feared by rivals elsewhere but their aura will be less intimidating at the Asian Games in Guangzhou. Whenever China hosts any major sporting competition, the home team almost inevitably reigns supreme. The 16th Asian Games will be no exception.

— THE NATION (BANGKOK)

## Indonesians need direction

While most Asian countries are using the quadrennial event as a stepping stone for the upcoming London Olympics, Indonesia is still struggling to set its own targets in Guangzhou. Indonesian Sports Council (KONI) Chairwoman Rita Subowo said the country is aiming for “a better achievement” than that of four years ago.

Finishing 22nd in Doha — after bringing home only two gold medals, four silver and 14 bronze — this year Indonesia hopes to win gold medals in weightlifting, badminton, bowling, dragon boat racing, karate, wushu and beach volleyball.

It is hard for Indonesia to climb higher in the medal tally as the country still continues to bank its hopes on a few specific sports. While experts and observers have repeatedly called on KONI and sports organizations to focus on sports offering opportunities for the most gold medals.

Sporting stakeholders, including the government and society, have the responsibility to ensure an adequate supply of young talents to join the elite athletes who represent Indonesia on the international stage.

Without any unforeseen breakthroughs, increased public enthusiasm, or political will from the government, it is difficult for Indonesia to repeat its success on the regional and international levels. Until then, we can only consider ourselves as participants in international sporting events, rather than contenders to be reckoned with.

— THE JAKARTA POST



ZHANG CHENLIANG / CHINA DAILY

### FROM THE BLOGS

#### ZHANG XIAOHUAN

Head coach of the Chinese synchronized swimming team

Wu Peng was very frustrated (after finishing fourth in the men's 200m butterfly), but I don't know how to console him.

Victory or defeat is a common thing for athletes.

I hope this type of disappointment will make him stronger.

#### HE WEI

CCTV Asian Games reporter

(The Chinese soccer team) survived the group matches, but ahead of them is the Republic of Korea (ROK).

Comparing the two teams' performances in the group stage, it's nearly impossible for China to accomplish the target of entering the quarter-finals.

However, I hope these Chinese youngsters will prove I am wrong by performing more determinedly and not suffer any more shame.

## Shuttler Lee and debutants fail

Malaysia's top shuttler Lee Chong Wei failed to deliver and all the first-timers in the Asiad team were simply a bundle of nerves. And it resulted in a shock 3-2 defeat by Thailand in the quarter-finals of the men's team tie. It was Malaysia's first loss to Thailand in 30 years.

Said team manager Datuk Majid Manap: “This is really disappointing. We talked about the challenges from China, Indonesia and the ROK but today, we could not even clear the quarter-finals against a fighting Thai team.”

Lee's task to get Malaysia off to a rousing start misfired. Singles coach Misbun Sidek admitted that it was a disappointing outing but said that Lee was under the weather.

“But he has a few days to rest and recover. I am confident he will bounce back in the individual competition,” he said.

— THE STAR (MALAYSIA)

## Tayef, the only bright spot

Bangladesh made a poor start to the 16th Asian Games with most of its athletes having ordinary times in Guangzhou yesterday.

The unlikely figure of Tayef Quader was the only success on the day through his win in the men's eight-ball singles at the Asian Games gymnasium.

But that was all as far as good news from China was concerned as Indonesia's Irsal Afrinneza Nasution eliminated Aga Navil Ibn Ekram in the same sport.

— THE DAILY STAR (BANGLADESH)

## Bangladesh skipper has golden gleam

Captain Mohammad Ashraful believes his team can clinch cricket gold at the 16th Asian Games if it can play up to its potential in the T20 competition.

“It's really a good feeling that I have got the opportunity to lead a team in the mega-event which is making its Asiad debut. I'm very much hopeful about the competition. It is really possible for us to clinch the gold medal if we can play our best cricket,” said Ashraful while at an official press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The team will leave Dhaka for Guangzhou on Nov 18.

— THE DAILY STAR