

Singapore boss gives the thumbs up

Singapore's athletes who are already in Guangzhou for the 16th Asian Games, which officially starts this Friday, have settled in without any problems, said chef-de-mission Low Teo Ping.

Earlier Wednesday, some 50 Singapore athletes, coaches and officials from football, gymnastics and shooting took part in the 10-minute-long flag raising ceremony at the Flag Plaza at the Asian Games Town, which is situated in the Panyu district south of Guangzhou.

The ceremony was also for Kazakhstan and Palestine, both of which were represented by representatives from their respective delegations.

"Since arriving yesterday morning, it has been very smooth," said Mr Low, 65.

"There were a little delays here and there, but generally everything has been almost clockwork.

"...The dormitories (at the Athletes' Village) are tremendous. It's as good as some of our condominiums in Singapore. I'm sure everyone will enjoy themselves and live it up."

Singapore will be represented by 240 athletes — its largest ever at the Asian Games — competing across 22 of the 42 sports featured during the Nov 12-27 Games.

— TODAY (SINGAPORE)

National mark the right tonic

Malaysian shooter Edward Khor Chye Seng is in high spirits for the Guangzhou Asian Games after rewriting his own national record in the men's double trap event at the national championships in Kota Tinggi, Johor, on Sunday.

The 49-year-old Johorean scored 178 points in the final to erase his national record by one point, which he set in competition in 2008.

Edward has been in smashing form over the past month. At the New Delhi Commonwealth Games, he made a memorable debut with his son, Benjamin Khor Cheng Jie, to win bronze in the double trap pairs event.

Edward, who is a businessman, said he was delighted to have smashed his national record ahead of his first Asiad.

"Although I will be taking part in the Asian Games for the first time, I hope to give my best against other world-class shooters to reach the final."

— THE STAR (MALAYSIA)

India aims high at Asiad

India's unprecedented success at the recent Commonwealth Games (CG) ought to be an indicator of bigger success in the future. While the euphoria over the stupendous achievements has died down, the Asian Games may prove to be a reality check.

Before the CG, India had not won 100 medals in a multi-sport event. Having crossed that landmark haul, its athletes are now confident and the backing from the system is better than before.

But at the Asian Games, starting this Friday, it appears doubt-

ful Indian athletes will be able to match the number of medals they won in New Delhi in October.

Going purely by numbers, the Indian athletes will have to surpass their own expectations to finish on the podium.

India's major gold medalists at the CG are far behind the Asian Games mark.

— DAILY NEWS & ANALYSIS (INDIA)

Thais arrive in Guangzhou

The largest group of the Thai contingent arrived in Guangzhou on Wednesday and the kingdom's sports authorities hope the delegation will return home with 16 gold medals.

Thailand is sending 802 athletes and officials to the Games — the fourth biggest squad for the Guangzhou event behind China,

Japan and the Republic of Korea.

The Thais finished fifth overall at the previous edition in Doha, Qatar, with 13 gold medals.

According to the Sports Authority of Thailand's (SAT) final forecast, Thailand is expected to claim 16 gold medals in sepak takraw (three), amateur boxing (two), sailing (two), shooting (three), athletics, golf, taekwondo, tennis, cue sports and weightlifting.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjaviva said on Tuesday Thai athletes have set sights on 14 to 15 gold medals.

"I think we have set a target of about 14-15 gold medals. But it is going to be tough. The competition gets tougher and tougher. But I think there is a lot of development from our part of the Thai people," Abhisit told China's Xinhua news agency.

"The Asian Games is a good opportunity for us to present premium-quality Thai fruits and introduce them to VIP guests and also for people who are attending the Games," Abhisit said.

"It is a treat, not a trick."

— BANGKOK POST

Japan sets sights on 60 gold medals

Japan aims to reach 60 gold medals and outnumber the Republic of Korea (ROK) to finish second in the gold medal standings behind host China at the upcoming Asian Games, its delegation chief said on Wednesday.

At the Games 2006 in Doha, ROK was second in the gold medal standings for the third straight Asian Games, leading Japan 58 to 50. China took home 165 gold medals.

"I'm impressed by all the modernized sporting facilities and venues in Guangzhou," Ichihara said.

"China successfully hosted the Beijing Olympics two years ago. We believe the upcoming Asian Games will be a great one, too."

"Not only China, Japan and ROK, but other countries such as India and ASEAN nations have shown significant improvement in sports, so the three countries' dominance might be talk of the past," he said.

Japan will participate in all 42 sports, including non-Olympic ones, and 476 medal events are played over the 15-day period from Saturday.

— THE MAINICHI DAILY NEWS (JAPAN)

High hopes abound in China

An old sports adage says no one remembers who finishes second. And perhaps no competitive athlete in his or her right mind would say the ultimate goal is to rank No 2.

Just don't tell that to the athletes of the ROK at the Asian Games.

At least for the Nov 12-27 Asiad in this southern Chinese city, Koreans will gladly take second place on the medal standings behind host China, which has been atop the medal standings in every Asiad since the 1982 edition in New Delhi.

And make no mistake about it. This is China's party. If the massive Beijing Olympics two years ago, when China topped the United States in the gold medal count for the first time, was the coming out party, then the Guangzhou Asian Games will serve as the latest validation of China's athletic supremacy in the continent. Of 476 gold medals up for grabs, China will look to haul in 200.

— YONHAP NEWS AGENCY (REPUBLIC OF KOREA)

