

Burning with pride

Hong Kong's opportunity to co-host the equestrian events of the Olympic Games has inspired the city to unite under the Olympic spirit

Flag-waving, cheering crowds poured onto the streets of Hong Kong last month as jubilant revellers welcomed the Olympic torch en route to Beijing for this year's Olympic Games. There was a scarlet sea as patriotic fans followed calls to wear red and support the "Journey of Harmony" relay theme.

Old and young were eager to catch a glimpse of the flame as it was carried by torch bearers from across the community, including retired windsurfing star Lee Lai-shan, who won gold in Atlanta in 1996, Olympic table tennis contender Li Ching, singer Jacky Cheung, and businesspeople, politicians and students.

Hong Kong was the first Chinese city to welcome the torch, and despite the fact that it was a wet and blustery workday, thousands of people took to the streets, shouting "Go China!" in support. Local schools got in on the act with their own competitions and activities to raise Olympic awareness, while flag-waving, cheering students at Leung Kui Kau Lutheran Primary School in Sha Tin were close enough to the relay to see the torch passing by them on a dragon boat.

The torch relay was the culmination of a range of activities in which people have shown how proud they are to be Chinese, especially as this is the first time China has hosted the Olympics and, of course, Hong Kong will be co-hosting the equestrian events.

In the New Territories, the Tai Po Olympics Carnival featured an Olympic Garden with horse riding trials, an air show and water-skiing. In Tsim Sha Tsui, a giant mural by 200 students and members of the community was the first of many activities planned to combine the Olympic event with art.

Photo: AFP





“ The drama/catwalk event in April in which TVB stars acted three different scenes to dramatise the way people here - whether they are office workers, families or children - are looking forward to the Olympics with pride ”



In March the Hong Kong Flower Show at Victoria Park bloomed with all the Olympic colours, and the grand Beijing Olympics display, titled Vibrant Blossoms, included floral sculptures of the Olympic logo and the five mascots for the Games.

Few celebrities are as famous as Jackie Chan, so it was only fitting that the actor and martial arts star recorded the official song "We Are Ready" last year, to mark the countdown to the Beijing Games.

As well as cheering on top local athletes, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department hopes that people will also be inspired to emulate them by taking a more active interest in sport. To encourage this, from July 1 to September 30, the department will make all leisure facilities such as holiday camps, water-sports centres, tennis courts, sports centres and swimming pools free.

The MegaBox mall in Kowloon Bay is also doing all it can to promote the Olympic spirit, and encouraging more people to participate in sports activities regularly. As part of the pre-Games build-up, the mall is hosting a mini sports challenge that includes table tennis, archery and basketball. Shoppers who fancy themselves on a par with local table tennis stars Ko Lai-chak and Li Ching, or see themselves as the next LeBron James or Kobe Bryant, can prove their skills in the competition and win a cash prize. For those who make it to the final round, there will be an added touch of glamour, as they will come up against several TVB celebrities.

The sports event follows on from the exclusive drama/catwalk show that took place in April where TVB stars acted out three different ways in which Hong Kong people are fans of the Olympics. They played office workers and families who, like so many people here, are looking forward to this summer's Games with pride and excitement.

At MegaBox, sports fans will be able to watch live TVB Olympic broadcasts on the mall's "Video Eye", while sitting back and relaxing in comfortable massage chairs.

On the first floor, MegaBox now boasts an official Beijing 2008 retail store where shoppers can buy items including T-shirts, mobile phone straps and keyrings sold exclusively in Hong Kong. There to welcome shoppers is the four-foot high Huanhuan - the Games mascot representing the Olympic flame. So even if shoppers are unable to get to Beijing for the Games in August, they can still have their photo taken with Huanhuan and feel part of the "One World One Dream" Olympic spirit.

北京奧運 點燃激情

一路上旗海飄揚、兩旁的群眾歡呼喝采、還有響亮號召穿上紅彤彤衣服的愛國市民，奧運火炬「和諧之旗」的接力，上月就在這熾熱的氣氛中開始傳送往北京。不管老幼都踴躍一睹聖火傳送，火炬手是從不同屆別代表中挑選，包括96年亞特蘭大滑浪風帆冠軍「風之后」李麗珊、乒乓銀牌得主李靜、歌星張學友、政商名人和學生代表。香港是火炬傳抵國門的第一站，誰都不在乎當天是下雨天或是忙得不開交的工作天，成千上萬的市民湧到街頭高喊「中國加油」，不少學校亦舉辦相關的競賽或活動來支持奧運和迎接聖火。位於沙田的路德會梁詠輝小學全體學生站在有利位置，搖旗吶喊並親臨火炬傳送上龍舟。連串迎接奧運的活動和澎湃的熱情，把火炬接力推上一波一波的高潮。群眾都自豪於中國首辦奧運和香港能協辦馬術賽事。

新界大埔海濱公園舉辦了一個奧運嘉年華，有馬匹試騎、花式飛行和花式潛水表演。尖沙咀豎立了第一幅由200名學生和社區人士參與創作的奧運壁畫。

3月維多利亞公園的香港花卉展覽，堆出嬌紅翠綠的「活力萬花迎奧運」花壇、維肖維妙得吉祥物福娃和奧運五環標誌。渾身是勁的天皇巨星成龍是少數最切合奧運活力主題的演藝界代表，他於去年參與灌錄北京奧運會倒數一周年歌曲《We are ready》。為推廣體育運動和激勵本地運動員，康樂及文化事務署推出免費使用康樂設施計劃，轄下多種康樂及體育場地如：公眾泳池、水上活動中心、網球場、渡假營等，於7月1日至9月30日期間免費開放供全港市民使用。

在九龍灣的MegaBox亦全力推動奧運精神，鼓勵更多人參與運動，強身健體。MegaBox「星級奇藝運動大挑戰」比賽，像「Y曲乒乓」、「鬼馬箭術」、「籃球籃球，籃多過球」。顧客儘管當自己是體壇猛將高禮澤、李靜或另一個立邦古士、高比拜仁，去贏取獎金；決賽更可與一眾TVB藝員一決雌雄。打響頭炮是4月舉行的「精彩北京盛事MegaBox新裝動力迎聖火」，TVB藝員演譯在不同的場景，如辦公室內的文員、普羅大眾的家庭等都在熱衷討論奧運，迎接夏季的來臨。

運動愛好者還可在MegaBox，安坐按摩椅，欣賞全港最大「霸圖形螢光幕」直播各項TVB奧運節目，親身感受現場氣氛。在一樓有獨家出售2008北京奧運紀念品商店，售賣T恤、手機繩和匙扣等。門口4呎高的福娃歡迎你的光臨和拍照留念，切實感受到「同一個世界 同一個夢想」的奧運精神。