



Gold rush

Hong Kong is buzzing in anticipation of the East Asian Games

In the elite arena of international sport, China has a host of heroes.

Our Chinese swimmers excelled, making a breakthrough of historical significance with the best-ever results at the World Swimming Championships. The Chinese diving "dream team" bagged several gold medals at the Beijing Olympics, and have dominated this year's world championship series. The Hong Kong cycling team took home mostly gold medals from the Asia Cup meet in Japan.

It is with an air of much excitement that these and other local sporting heroes will challenge the region's best, when Hong Kong hosts the East Asian Games.

Athletes from nine countries and regions, the cream of the sporting elite, will take part in the event. Some are medal winners from Beijing, and many are ranked top of their field in the world. They will represent their nation in the highest Olympic tradition of solidarity, sportsmanship and excellence.

It is sure to be a moving experience. Supporters will cheer on their heroes and wave flags in a heart-warming display of patriotism. Audiences of millions will share the thrills, watching the spectacle on television screens worldwide.

Everyone wants their favourite to win. But no matter who stands on the winners' podium, they will applaud courage and effort.

It is in this spirit of Olympic endeavour that Hong Kong will, for the first time, host such a large-scale multisports event.

Over 10 days in December, the East Asian Games will provide the most intense international competition since the 2008 Beijing Olympics.





These Games bring out the best in so many sectors of society. An army of volunteers will no doubt make an invaluable contribution. Corporate sponsors are lending their support. Kerry Properties, a Gold Sponsor of the East Asian Games, is joining hands with this sporting event.

To promote the Games, a cycling race will be held in the carpark of MegaBox, Kerry Properties' innovative shopping and entertainment mall in East Kowloon. Shoppers will be treated to a thrilling spectacle as cyclists pedal furiously up the circular driveway – a feat that will test their physical endurance, while also raising money for charity.

There are many aspects of these Games to look forward to. Timothy Fok, East Asian Games chairman, says the opening ceremony will be a highlight, showcasing Hong Kong's history, modern city planning and civic spirit in an impressive pageant. Staged on the waterfront with Hong Kong's famous skyline as background, the ceremony will feature music, costumes, dancers, designs and performances that reflect the culture of Southern China.

The audience are expected to be enthralled by the largest background, largest stage and largest number of spectators. A spectacular fireworks display will light up the sky already dazzling from a light show of lasers, neons and beacons beamed from the city's tallest buildings.

The Games will have a total of 22 sports. Swimming and diving will be must-see events, especially after the Chinese team's performance at the recent FINA championships. Hong Kong has some of the top-ranked squash players, so Fok says this is a sport in which the home team should excel.

The local heroes in cycling, windsurfing and table tennis will be inspired by the chance to impress in front of their home crowd. "And we must keep our eyes on cue sports, because China has a stable of top pool talents who have taken on the best in the world, including Britain," Fok says.



Timothy Fok, chairman of the East Asian Games. Left: John Hui, a tennis player from Hong Kong, takes the torch across Victoria Harbour. 東亞運動會籌委會主席霍震霆。左圖：本港網球選手許建業手持火炬，橫渡維港。

He feels privileged that champions from so many disciplines will be vying for honours in Hong Kong. There's no doubt competition will be fierce: two-thirds of the medals that Asia won in the Beijing Olympics were garnered by athletes from this region.

A wide range of venues have been prepared to hold events, including the new Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground, designed and built with a green theme in mind.

The East Asian Games are held every four years, and this is the first time that Hong Kong will host it. It will be an occasion of great pride for the city and, in the words of Fok, a lesson for all of us.

"I am myself moved every time by the sight of elite athletes embracing, consoling and encouraging each other because they believe in the pursuit of excellence, and in the sweetness of triumph when confronted with a worthy sporting adversary."

體壇盛會 精彩無限

過去一年可算是我國體育運動方面的豐收期，在國際體壇上，來自中國的名將人才輩出。中國泳手在世界游泳錦標賽取得空前佳績，「夢幻」跳水隊除於北京奧運囊括了大部份的金牌之外，更於世界跳水錦標賽取得壓倒性的優勢。香港單車隊亦不遑多讓，於日本舉行的獎杯賽摘下大部份金牌。

今年12月，香港將成為東亞運動會的東道主，來自香港及中國的體壇精英，將與區內其他國家及地區的運動好手一較高下，屆時熾熱的比賽氣氛將引起全城哄動。

來自九個國家及地區的頂尖運動員，當中包括北京奧運獎牌得主，以及各運動項目之精英選手，將會弘揚奧運的團結及體育精神，全力以赴，為國爭光。

比賽場面有多震撼，不難想像。支持者為國家英雄歡呼助威，感人的愛國情操將一幕幕展現眼前，感染過百萬於電視機前欣賞賽事的觀眾。

每位參賽選手都有其擁戴者，不過無論誰勝誰負，所有人都會為獎台上的選手獻上鼓勵的掌聲，為他們的勇氣及努力喝采。香港有幸能舉辦東亞運動會這項大型競賽，體現難能可貴的奧運精神。

即將舉行的東亞運動會為期10日，競賽的激烈程度相信不比奧運遜色。香港作為東亞運的主辦城市，定當動員全城精英，包括安排大批義工來提供不同協助。多家贊助機構亦不遺餘力，其中嘉里建設以金贊助商身分，在集團的各個層面來支持這項盛事。

其中較矚目的，包括於旗下東九龍嶄新的購物及娛樂點 MegaBox 的停車場，搭建比賽場地來進行慈善單車比賽，屆時顧客既可購物，又可一睹緊張刺激的繞圈賽。比賽除了考驗車手的耐力之外，更名為慈善機構籌款。

賽事以外，東亞運還有其他可觀之處。東亞運動會籌委會主席霍震霆先生提到，將於海旁舉行的開幕禮，會以舉世聞名的維港夜景作背景，內容盡顯香港的歷史、現代化的都會發展及人民精神。典禮將以音樂、美輪美奐的服裝及設計，加上舞蹈及其他表演元素，展現中國南部地區的特色。此外，不能不提開幕禮的「三最」——最大的背景、最大的舞台及最多的觀眾，定能令人目不暇給、印象難忘。燦爛奪目的大型煙花匯演，配上維港兩岸高樓大廈「幻彩詠香江」繽紛艷麗的鐳射燈光音樂匯演，相得益彰。

今屆東亞運共有22項比賽，值得留意的有游泳及跳水項目，尤其中國隊最近於國際泳聯舉辦的賽事取得佳績，令這兩個比賽項目更具可觀性。另外，香港壁球選手的實力亦不容忽視，霍震霆先生指港隊在此項目將有優勢。香港的單車、滑浪風帆及乒乓球選手，因有主場之利，均大有機會脫穎而出。霍先生補充，中國桌球隊近期連番打敗英國等桌球強國之高手，故桌球項目亦相當有看頭。

霍先生表示，大批運動員將雲集香港參加四年一度的東亞運，競逐殊榮，而香港有幸能首次成為主辦城市，尤感驕傲，舉辦世界性賽事實是難能可貴的一課。不同的競賽場地現已準備就緒，包括以綠色為主題的將軍澳運動場主場地。亞洲在上屆奧運會摘取的獎牌中，有三分之二屬於參與本屆東亞運的國家及地區，可見這次競賽將十分激烈。

霍先生續稱：「運動員有一股追求卓越的精神，每次見到他們經過一輪苦戰，在取得勝利之後與戰友互相擁抱鼓勵，那些情景令我深受感動。」