

A Night to Remember



Inside this edition

Page 2: President's Message. **Pages 3-5:** 1st OCA Sport Congress in Kuwait. **Page 6:** Tokyo bids for 2016 Olympic Games. **Pages 7-9:** Cover Story - OCA HQ Inauguration Ceremony. **Pages 10-14:** News from Asian NOCs. **Page 15:** Games updates. **Page 16:** Singapore prepares for Asian Youth Games, Diary of Events, OCA Sponsors.

Asia can take pride from Inauguration and Congress



Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah
President
Olympic Council of Asia

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big "thank you" to everyone involved in the organisation of our two major events in Kuwait in March.

The Inauguration Ceremony of the new OCA Headquarters on March 11 and the first OCA Sport Congress from March 12-14 were both outstanding successes, and filled me with pride at our achievements.

Like a gold medal-winning performance, it was a true team effort by the Asian sports family, and we can take a lot of satisfaction at the smooth running of these massive logistical exercises.

But while they marked the finish of months of careful planning and preparation, they signalled only the start of the work ahead in our continued efforts to raise the level of Asian sport. It is the beginning, not the end.

The new Headquarters, Olympia, will provide more than just an administrative centre, high-tech sports academy and all the other services available; they will also guarantee a constant source of income to the OCA due to the twin towers of offices, the shopping mall and the five-star Hilton Hotel. This is a very important factor in the current economic climate, as the organising committees of major sports events around the world are encountering budget problems these days. As the owner of Olympia, the OCA is assured of a variety of revenue streams to keep our finances in a healthy state, so this can only be positive for the future of Asian sport in general.

The Inauguration Ceremony show itself was truly breathtaking, and again I would like to pay tribute to the performers from all corners of Asia and would like to convey our gratitude to all the NOCs and Organising Committees who generously participated in this historic event. It was a recipe that fused all the cultural ingredients from our five regions and created an unforgettable extravaganza under the stars.

The first OCA Sport Congress involved three hectic days of listening and learning, sharing and networking, and helped us to identify the way forward in all six themes. We will present our findings to the International Olympic Committee, so the results of this Asian initiative will have an impact around the world in the years to come.

Thank you to everyone involved in both these events – and congratulations on a job well done!

Sheikh Ahmad appointed Deputy Prime Minister

The Olympic Council of Asia extends its heartiest congratulations to H.E. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah, President, OCA, on his appointment as the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Minister of State for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs in the Kuwaiti Cabinet.

The appointment was made on May 29, 2009, by H.H. Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister of Kuwait.

Kuwait recently concluded its general elections and, in an historic verdict, four female Members of Parliament were elected for the first time.

H.E. Sheikh Ahmad had served as the Minister of Information (media and culture), Minister of Energy (oil, gas, water and electricity) and Minister of National Security in previous Kuwaiti governments.

His rise to Deputy Prime Minister at the age of 45 is yet another honour for Sheikh Ahmad, who has been OCA President since 1991 and a Member of the International Olympic Committee since 1992.



IOC President Jacques Rogge addresses the audience at the opening of the 1st OCA Sport Congress on March 12

Congress 'will serve Asia for 10 years'

The President of the Olympic Council of Asia, H.E. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah, declared the first OCA Sport Congress from March 12-14 a "full success" at the closing ceremony.

Describing the Congress as the start of a new tradition in Asia, Sheikh Ahmad said the findings would light the way forward for the next 10 years.

"We are very glad to receive your remarks and your support to build our new vision and strategy for the future," the OCA President said in the Arraya Ballroom of the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Kuwait City.

"I am confident that through this cooperation and dialogue we can find many benefits to the OCA and to the sports movement."

Sheikh Ahmad thanked everyone for their hard work, and assured them their efforts would guide sport in the right direction. "They have added value for our organisation and movement," he said.

The closing address and prize presentation brought to an end three days of hectic Congress activity featuring a wide range of speakers from Asia and around the world in a series of workshops.

The lobby of the vast ballroom annex was transformed into a mini-Olympic Village, with the organising committees of upcoming OCA events greeting guests with colourfully decorated kiosks and publicity material.

Inside, the ballroom was a hive of activity as the speakers and poster presenters tackled the six Congress themes: sports science, the role of women in sport, governance of sport, sports

marketing, Asian Games and sport and the environment.

The opening ceremony on March 12 was attended by IOC President Dr. Jacques Rogge, who recalled his comments at a press conference after the 2004 Athens Olympics when he described Asia as a rising sports super power.

"This was confirmed in Beijing in 2008," he added, "with 212 Olympic medals won by 19 NOCs in Asia."



Dr. Rogge said that a large population helped Asia's cause, but this factor alone could not produce results. It also needed good organisation and

support from all 45 NOCs.

He described the organisation within the OCA as "dynamic", and that "great leadership" and unity had helped move Asia forward on the world stage.

Congress Commission Director Dr. Reza Gharakhanlou said 315 scientific papers had been received from 17 Asian NOCs, and 53 had been selected for presentation at the Congress. In addition there were 12 poster presentations and 74 invited experts, making around 130 presentations in total over three days in the four workshops.

Download the Kuwait Declaration and eight Congress Resolutions from the OCA website, www.ocasias.org





Tokyo 2016 bid gains momentum



An artist's impression of the new Olympic Stadium, with a capacity of 100,000

The past, present and future were showcased by Tokyo's 2016 Olympic Bid Committee when the International Olympic Committee's Evaluation Commission visited the Japanese capital from April 16-19.

The past came in the form of iconic venues from the 1964 Tokyo Olympics that will be used in 2016 if Tokyo's bid is successful; the present in total financial support from the city and national government; and the future in the eco-friendly, compact concept of the bid.

In the only official press conference during the visit, Commission Chair Nawal El Moutawakel (pictured below) praised Tokyo 2016's vision, sustainability and legacy, and said she was "most impressed" by what Tokyo could offer to the Olympic Games.

Ms El Moutawakel, an IOC Executive Board member from Morocco, added: "During our visit we were pleased to speak with the Prime Minister (Taro Aso), himself an Olympian. We were also pleased to meet other Government representatives, our IOC colleagues present here, the Japanese Olympic



Committee, the Japanese Paralympic Committee and Sports Federations. We have also witnessed the support shown by the Japanese business community."

The hosts were happy with their efforts, and felt they had done everything possible to persuade the IOC to pick Tokyo ahead of rival bidders Chicago, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro when the decision is made in Copenhagen, Denmark, on October 2, 2009.

* **Chiharu Igaya**, IOC Vice President and Tokyo 2016 Executive Board member: "I stand here before you with a sense of great pride because I have seen my home city shown in the best possible light to the IOC Evaluation Commission. Tokyo really excelled. As Chairman of a previous IOC Evaluation Commission, I know how much work goes into preparation for such a visit. What I have seen here has been truly exceptional."

* **Dr. Ichiro Kono**, Chair and CEO of Tokyo 2016: "This has been a major week for Tokyo and for Japan. We have been honoured to host the esteemed members of the IOC Evaluation Commission and extremely pleased to answer their questions and show them our exciting city of Tokyo. Our Games concept is about setting the stage for heroes – offering them the chance to achieve their best performance in 2016."

The Evaluation Commission will publish a report on their findings on September 2 – exactly one month before the crucial vote.

Tokyo 2016 in numbers

34 venues -- 23 existing, 5 new, 6 temporary
 97% of competition venues within 8-km (5-mile) radius of Olympic Village
 US\$3.7 billion -- money in the bank from the Tokyo metropolitan government
 US\$2.89 billion -- projected revenue
 US\$9 -- the cheapest ticket

OCA spirit burns brightly

It was a night no one will ever forget in the history of the Olympic Council of Asia.

On Wednesday, March 11, 2009, the OCA put on a dazzling cultural display to mark the inauguration of their new headquarters, Olympia, in Kuwait.

The five regions of the vast Asian continent – South East, East, West, Central and South – all contributed to a colourful evening's entertainment as the OCA ushered in a new era with their spectacular four-phase development.

Under the patronage of H.H. The Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the plaque was unveiled by H.H. the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The guests were welcomed by the OCA President, H.E. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah, who spoke in Arabic and then English to the invitation-only audience of sports leaders and dignitaries from around the world.

Sheikh Ahmad described the inauguration as "an historic moment for all of us", and reminded everyone of the destruction caused to the former OCA HQ two decades ago by the invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

"Through the spirit of the Kuwaitis and the Olympic family in Asia we are celebrating again," he said proudly. "Through cooperation and unity we have made our dream come true."

The evening's festivities acknowledged the pioneering work of the early Asian sports leaders, from the first Oriental Games in the Philippines in 1913 through to 1982, when the OCA succeeded the Asian Games Federation as the supreme governing body of sports in the continent.

"We will never forget the founders of our strategy, and now we are one of the most important sports organisations of the world," added the OCA President.



A water-drum and painting demonstration produced this eye-catching portrait of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"Together we did a lot and together we can do more."

IOC President Dr. Jacques Rogge summed up the evening's entertainment, which ended with flags of all 45 Asian NOCs on stage and the 240-plus performers from around the continent singing under the slogan of "Inspire the World."

"It was a splendid ceremony with a fantastic backdrop of the new OCA HQ and under a full moon...I am sure it made Asia and the whole Olympic movement very proud," said Dr. Rogge.



The Inauguration Ceremony produced many highlights, including the fiery Chinese dragon dance.

Asia's rich culture on display



in inauguration celebration



Afghanistan



OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah presented Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai with the OCA's highest award in appreciation of his efforts in the service of Afghan and Asian sports at a ceremony in Kabul.

Karzai praised the OCA for the promotion of Afghan sports since 2001, enabling Afghan athletes to win medals in regional championships in 2002 and 2008.

He thanked the OCA, in particular, for building two stadiums: the Kabul soccer stadium and the building that houses the headquarters of the Olympic authorities.

Sheikh Ahmad said the OCA planned to undertake several sports ventures in Afghanistan between 2009 and 2012, including the construction of two sports stadiums. It will also grant scholarships to Afghan athletes for training in various sports abroad.

The president of the Afghanistan NOC, Zaher Aghbar, held a reception in honour of Sheikh Ahmad and the accompanying delegation. Mr. Aghbar later visited Kuwait to discuss future support for the Olympic movement with the OCA President.

Cambodia



The "Road of Asia" project to promote the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games made a home port visit to Sihanoukville, a beautiful coastal city of Cambodia, on June 3 following its previous stop at Phnom Penh.

Two Deputy Governors of Sihanoukville, other local officials as well as faculties and students from local international Chinese schools, including Gun Hua School, were on hand to welcome the delegation.

At Independence Square, local governors and He Jiqing, Director of GAGOC Ceremonies and Cultural Events Department, led a friendly discussion about the Asian Games. The governor said the arrival of the "Road of Asia" delegation was a great milestone for the relationship between Cambodia and China, which also enhanced communications between Sihanoukville and Guangzhou.

Mr He said that the "Road of Asia" in Cambodia had been a total success. "We are really moved and encouraged by the cordial support for the Guangzhou Asian Games from the Cambodian government," he said.

China



The mainland plans to send its largest-ever sports delegation to the World Games when they are held in Kaohsiung, Chinese Taipei, from July 16-26.

The Games will be the biggest international sporting event to take place on the island.

Liu Peng, Director General of China's General Administration of Sport, said the mainland was keen to support the 2009 World Games. He made the announcement while meeting with the visiting Kaohsiung mayor, Chen Chu, in Beijing on Friday, May 22. The mainland will send more than 100 athletes to Kaohsiung for the Games and dispatch another delegation to watch the

spectacle, said Liu.

"We hope our participation at the Kaohsiung World Games will deepen the kindred feelings between people across the Straits," he said.

The World Games is an international competition featuring non-Olympic sports such as dragon boat racing. China has competed in the World Games four times.

* The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) met in Beijing on May 22 with the participation of 85 of the 95 COC members from across China. Liu Peng, Director of the General Administration of Sport of China, was re-elected COC President.

DPR Korea



To mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-DPR Korean diplomatic relations and the 2009 China-DPRK Friendship Year, a DPR Korean taekwondo delegation made its first official visit to China and gave taekwondo demonstrations in Beijing Shichahai Sports School and Beijing No. 65 Middle School on May 16 and 18 respectively.

According to one of the officials with the delegation, taekwondo is a national sport supported by the government in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Students there who fail to pass his/her taekwondo course might not be able to graduate from school.

After this taekwondo performance tour by the DPRK, China will send a wushu delegation to DPRK in September.

Hong Kong-China



The Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong-China is using its annual Festival of Sport to promote the 2009 East Asian Games.

Sponsored by the Bank of China (Hong Kong) and supported by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, the 52nd annual festival started on March 14-15.

To celebrate the hosting of the 5th East Asian Games in Hong Kong in December 2009, the theme "Hong Kong's Readiness for 5th East Asian Games" was chosen, and elements from the 23 sports events of the Games were incorporated into the opening programme.

To promote "Sport for All", the general public will be invited to join some 70 sports events organised from March to June 2009. More than 60 national sports associations will take part in the festival this year.



India



The first organising committee meeting of the 35th National Games, to be held in Kerala in May 2010, was held in Thiruvananthapuram on February 10, 2009. The meeting was chaired by the Kerala Chief Minister, Shri V.S. Achuthanandan.

Shri A.K. Antony, Defence Ministry; President, Indian Olympic Association, Shri Suresh Kalmadi, M.P., and the Sports Minister of Kerala, Shri M. Vijayakumar, attended the meeting. 35 sports disciplines have been decided for the 35th National Games. Games will be held in seven cities which are made into three clusters: Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode.

Shri K. Murugan, Vice President, IOA, and Secretary General of the Volleyball Federation of India & the Tamil Nadu Olympic Association, has been appointed Chairman of the Games Technical Conduct Committee.

The 34th National Games will be held in Ranchi from November 24-December 4, 2009, and the 36th National Games will be in Goa in 2011.

Indonesia



The Indonesian Olympic Committee (KOI) has been awarded a grant from Olympic Solidarity to conduct the project entitled "Strength and Conditioning for the Elementary School Children of Indonesia."

The project is to develop and distribute a DVD and associated written materials outlining a series of strength and conditioning exercises and programmes targeted at the 7-12 years age group.

The exercises and training programmes developed will be based upon the recently released Australian Strength and Conditioning Association (ASCA) Position Stand entitled "Resistance Training for Children and Youth" (see www.strengthandconditioning.org). They will involve exercises that are based on minimal equipment requirements and utilise the children's own body weight and common items used in a classroom such as desks and chairs etc., so that it can be readily implemented throughout Indonesia's many provinces.

The project will be coordinated by Dr Greg Wilson, PhD, who was the main author of the ASCA Position Stand, and when it is completed KOI will be happy to share its contents with other NOCs.

Dr Wilson is the programme manager of KOI, head of the strength and conditioning department of the Indonesian National Committee of Sport (KONI), and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Australian Strength and Conditioning (JASC).

Iraq



The new president of the NOC, Raad Hammoudi, visited Kuwait from May 25-27 to meet OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah. He also had a meeting with the OCA technical department's Haider A. Farman, manager of the Asian Games department, and received details of all the world and continental programmes from 2009 to 2012, plus invitations to the 1st Asian Youth Games in Singapore and the OCA General Assembly.

Japan



The Japanese Olympic Committee General Council took place on April 8 and the new Executive Board members and functions for the new term were resolved. The new term is from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011.

President, Tsunekazu Takeda; Vice President, Tomiaki Fukuda; Vice President, Masato Mizuno; Secretary General, Noriyuki Ichihara; Senior EB members, Hidetoshi Tanaka, Haruki Uemura, Koji Kimura, Ichita Itabashi.

* The JOC marked the centenary of its country's active involvement in the Olympic Movement by announcing the creation of the Kano Jigoro Memorial International Sport Institute in Tokyo.

The Institute, inaugurated exactly 100 years after judo founder Jigoro Kano became the first IOC member from Asia, will promote the values of Olympism in Japan and across the world.

* The JOC announced on April 17 that seven companies had signed agreements to join its new JOC Gold Partnership Program for first-class corporate sponsorships of sporting events connected with the Olympic Movement. The seven are Asahi Breweries, Ajinomoto Co., NTT Docomo, Tokio Marine Holdings, Toyota Motor Corporation, Nippon Life Insurance and Yahoo Japan.

Jordan



The Jordan Olympic Committee has announced ambitious plans which could reshape the Kingdom's sporting future.

The pioneering move was revealed by HRH Prince Feisal Al Hussein, President of the JOC, in order to provide better training facilities as Jordan strives to improve its performance on the world's biggest sporting stages like the Asian Games and Olympic Games. One of the proposals is a specialist Jordanian Institute for Sport to aid professional athlete development.

"These plans mark a major turning point for sport in the Kingdom," said HRH Prince Feisal, who has been JOC President since 2003.

"Our vision for sport is to make it accessible for all, from children at grass roots right up to preparing our elite athletes, and this announcement is a serious indication of our plans for the future."

The Academy is part of the Developing Sport Project, which has received an initial injection of JD3 million from the JOC and will be developed in conjunction with the Prime Ministry, the Ministry of Planning and Greater Amman Municipality.

JOC Secretary General Dr Sari Hamdan added: "A 25,000-square metre site in Ghamadan Park has been earmarked for this project along with another cash boost of JD15 million promised by the government."

As well as the practical sporting initiatives, the JOC has formed a financial watchdog to monitor the spending of all its federations and ensure greater accountability.

During his six-year tenure as President, HRH Prince Feisal has managed to increase the budget for the JOC from JD2 million to JD12 million this year, raising the need for closer scrutiny on how the national sports federations spend their allocations.

* Jordan's Salameh Al Aqra, 27, proved to be one of the world's greatest endurance runners when he finished third in the gruelling six-day Des Sables Ultra Marathon in Morocco, and has been honoured by the JOC.

* Students from around the world attended an IOC masters course in Jordan from April 20-25 as part of the IOC MEMOS Programme under the banner "Managing Human Resources in Sport", supported by Olympic Solidarity. 38 participants and 12 professors attended.

Korea



The Korean Olympic Committee affirmed the Pyeong Chang 2018 Winter Olympic bid at its General Assembly on April 23. In February, the KOC invited all Korean cities to submit an application for the 2018 Winter Olympic bid. To assess the viability of these applications, the KOC organised an evaluation commission composed of 15 experts to inspect the overall plans and infrastructure of the bidding cities.

The commission visited the applicant cities of Pyeong Chang and Gang Neung from April 6 to 7. On April 16, the KOC Executive Board meeting reviewed Pyeong Chang's capacity for hosting the 2018 Winter Olympics and decided to recommend Pyeong Chang's bidding for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games to the KOC General Assembly. The IOC will announce the winning city at its general assembly in Durban, South Africa, in July 2011.

Kuwait



The NOC hosted a dinner for the new president of the Iraq NOC, Raad Hammoudi, during his visit to the OCA in May. Having participated in the Arab NOC Federation in Riyadh in March, Kuwait is preparing for the Asian Youth Games, Asian Martial Arts Games and Asian Indoor Games in 2009.

Kyrgyzstan



OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah arrived in Bishkek on April 6 for a two-day working visit. According to Kanat Amankulov, General Secretary of the NOC of Kyrgyzstan, a number of high-level meetings took place to discuss and consider the prospects of closer cooperation between the OCA and the KNOC.

Lebanon



The IOC and OCA formed an interim committee of four members in order to resolve pending issues: to amend local government law and the NOC statutes. On completion of both tasks, the interim committee will call for fresh elections, expected to be held soon. Lebanon will compete in the Mediterranean Games in Pescara, Italy, this year as well as the three OCA events.

Macau-China



A team of OCA experts visited Singapore to share their experience of staging large-scale multi-sports events with the organising committees of the 1st Asian Youth Games in 2009 and the 1st Youth Olympic Games in 2010. The visit was made also to learn the preparation progress of the host city.

The visiting OCA experts included Manuel Silvério, Chairman of the OCA Media Committee and President of the former Macau 2nd Asian Indoor Games Organising Committee, and Abdulla Al

Mulla, member of the OCA Coordination Committee and Director of Protocol and International Affairs of the former Doha Asian Games Organising Committee.

Malaysia



The 28th OCM Annual General Assembly was held at OCM Indoor Sports Arena, Wisma OCM, Jalan Hang Jebat, Kuala Lumpur, on May 30. All 34 Ordinary Members (national sports associations) were present with a total of 98 delegates. Twelve out of 16 Association Members with one delegate each were also present.

The office bearers are as follows: President, YAM Tunku Tan Sri Imran ibni Almarhum Tuanku Ja'afar; Deputy President, Y.Bhg. Datuk Dr. M. Jegathesan; Vice Presidents, Y.Bhg. Dato' A. Sani Karim, Y.Bhg. Prof. Dato' Arch. W. Y. Chin, Y.Bhg. Prof. Dato' Dr. Zakaria Ahmad, Y.Bhg. Dato' Roy Rajasingham. Hon. Secretary, Dato' Sieh Kok Chi; Hon. Treasurer, Y.Bhg. Dato' Seri Kee Yong Wee; Hon. Asst. Treasurer, Encik Rosmanizam Abdullah; Hon. Asst. Secretary (woman), Cik Moira Tan Siew See; Hon. Asst. Secretary (man), Encik Ramlay Ibrahim.

* The OCM is mourning the late Encik Sum Kwok Seng, who passed away peacefully on May 30 at the age of 84. The late Encik Sum Kwok Seng was a weightlifter and international referee, and an active member of the Malaysian Amateur Weightlifting Federation from the 1950s until the 1990s. For his many years of dedicated service to sport, he was inducted into the OCM Hall of Fame in 2002.

* The OCM is mourning the late Tuan Haji Kamaruddin Maidin, who represented Malaya in the long jump at the 1960 Rome Olympic Games.

After retiring from competition, the former national long jump and triple jump champion became an athletics coach and official and was instrumental in coaching a couple of his six sons to be national athletes.

* The 21st OCM Executive Board meeting was held on Monday, May 11, when it was decided to submit expressions of interest to the International Olympic Committee to bid for the hosting of the 125th IOC Session in Kuala Lumpur in 2013.

* The 2009 McDonald's Olympic Day Run will be held on July 12 at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur, featuring 10 categories from veterans to primary school children over distances ranging from 10km to 3km.

Mongolia



Dr. D. Zagdsuren, President of Mongolia's National Olympic Committee and leading sports doctor, has received the award for Man of the Year 2008 in sports medicine and healthcare by the American Biographical Institute.

The sports doctors team - headed by Dr. Zagdsuren and comprised of Dr. J. Khatanbaatar, President of the Mongolian Sports Medicine Federation, Dr. Ch. Nasanbat, Olympic Team Chief Doctor, and Dr. Lkhagva, member of the Mongolian Sports Medicine Federation - has made a tremendous contribution to the medical service and to upgrading the performance of Mongolian Olympic team members. As a result they captured two golds and two silvers at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Pakistan



The inauguration of the new, state-of-the-art OCA headquarters is a step forward to sporting excellence in the continent, according to the President of the Pakistan Olympic Association, Lt Gen (retd) Syed Arif Hasan.

He termed the new headquarters a landmark achievement by OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah, whose vision and planning for the cause of sports had established him as one of the world's top sports leaders.

"The headquarters are equipped with the most modern sports facilities, including the OCA Academy, and the presence of all facilities under one roof has made it one of the best sports headquarters in the world after the IOC headquarters in Lausanne in Switzerland," he asserted.

Palestine



The OCA is mourning the tragic death of Akram Zaher, former Secretary General of the Palestine Olympic Committee. Mr. Akram, aged 56, was killed in a bomb explosion near a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon on Monday, March 23. He was serving as a member of the OCA's Sport & Environment Committee and also represented the Palestine Olympic Committee in a number of sports and in the Olympic Movement in Asia and at the world level.

Mr. Akram was in Kuwait for the OCA's new HQ inauguration ceremony on March 11 and for the 1st OCA Sport Congress from March 12-14.

"The OCA deeply mourns the attack on Mr. Akram Zaher and expresses its deep condolences on his sad demise. He was a good friend and we will cherish his memory in our hearts," said Mr. Husain Al Musallam, Director General of the OCA.

Qatar



Olympic legend Carl Lewis was welcomed to Doha by H.E. Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Secretary General of the Qatar Olympic Committee.

Sheikh Saoud said the American track star still enjoyed tremendous popularity around the world, and remained a role model for all young athletes.

Lewis was briefed on the Schools' Olympic Day Programme, which was organised by the QOC in conjunction with other government bodies and reached a successful conclusion in mid-March under the theme "Sport and the Environment."

Expressing his delight at being in Doha, Lewis praised the development of global sport in Qatar and said the excellent facilities were comparable to anywhere in the world.

The visiting delegation included Paralympic ski champion Chris Waddell and the IOC Ambassador for Paralympic Sports, Ban Hu, from China.

During their visit to the QOC building, Lewis and his delegation called in at the Global Sport Fund office and were informed that the fund is the outcome of cooperation between the QOC and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). He

was briefed on the GSF activities, programmes and objectives aimed at educating youth and providing them with the means to a healthy lifestyle.

* H.E. Sheikh Saoud inaugurated the new headquarters of the Qatar Paralympic Committee (QPC) on Sunday, April 19.

The ceremony was attended by Philip Craven, President of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), alongside QPC board members, QOC Officials and presidents and general secretaries of several sports federations.

Sheikh Saoud and Mr. Craven unveiled the memorial plaque and conducted a tour of the building that houses administrative offices, an indoor hall with a multi-purpose playground, a gymnasium hall, turf playground and track for athletics and high jump.

Mr. Craven lauded the role of Sheikh Saoud in bringing such change, and said that the development was a great achievement for Qatar, the region, Asia and the world.

Singapore



The Singapore NOC hosted the Olympic Solidarity/OCA Regional Forum for Southeast Asia from February 13-14. Delegates from 10 National Olympic Committees were present. Timor Leste was not represented at the Forum.

Ng Ser Miang, SNOOC Vice President and IOC Executive Board Member, gave an opening address to welcome the delegates. After the address, Olivier Niamkey and Edward Kensington shared details of the Olympic Solidarity Quadrennial Plan (2009 to 2012) programme guide for NOCs with the delegates.

Chinese Taipei



The Olympic Solidarity/OCA Forum for East Asia was held in Chinese Taipei on February 10-11.

The forum concentrated mainly on the issues concerning Olympic Solidarity activities for the new quadrennial 2009 to 2012. In addition, the organising committees of the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, the Hanoi 3rd Asian Indoor Games, Singapore 1st Asian Youth Games and Bangkok 1st Asian Martial Art Games also made presentations.

All the member NOCs of East Asia attended. Also present were Prof. Hoang Vinh Giang, Vice President OCA, Dr. Feng-Shu Chang, OCA EB Member, Husain Al-Musallam, Director General OCA, and Olivier Niamkey from Olympic Solidarity.

Tajikistan



President Emomali Rahmon has been awarded the highest decoration of the OCA for his significant contribution to the development of sport and the Olympic movement in the country, according to the presidential press service.

Visiting OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah bestowed the decoration on President Rahmon, who also heads Tajikistan's NOC, in Dushanbe on April 8. (continued page 14)

Rahmon and Sheikh Ahmad discussed a broad range of issues related to cooperation between Tajikistan and the OCA. The OCA president noted that two documents on cooperation between Tajikistan's NOC and OCA aimed at the construction of sports facilities in Tajikistan and the development of sports among Tajik school students would be signed in Dushanbe.

The purpose of the visit was for the OCA delegation to get acquainted with development of the Olympic movement in Tajikistan and conduct negotiations with Tajik officials on further expansion of cooperation between the OCA and Tajikistan, implementation of joint projects, as well as participation of Tajik athletes in OCA events.

* Tajikistan hosted the Olympic Solidarity/OCA Forum for Central Asia in Dushanbe from March 6-7.

Turkmenistan



OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah awarded Turkmenistan's President, Gurbanguli Berdimukhamedov, the OCA's highest medal at a ceremony in Ashgabat on April 6. The award came in recognition of the role played by Turkmenistan, its president and sports institutions for disseminating Olympic concepts, serving Asian youth and developing Turkmen sports.

Speaking to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Sheikh Ahmad said the honoring of the Turkmen leader came in recognition of his personal and official role in serving sports and athletes in Asia.

UAE



The United Arab Emirates NOC has announced the composition of the new Board of Directors for the Olympic quadrennial 2009-2012, under the presidency of H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

The full list, announced April 29, is: President, H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum; 1st Vice President, H.E. Yousef Yaaqoob Assirkal; 2nd Vice President, H.E. Mohammed Mohammed Fadel Al Hamli; Secretary General, H.E. Saeed Abdul Ghaffar Hussain; Assistant Secretary General, H.E. Mohammed Juma bin Hindi; Director of Finance, H.E. Abdul Rahman Falaknaz.

Board Members: H.E. General (R) Salim Obaid Al Shamsi, H.E. Mohammed Ali Al Kamali, H.E. General (R) Ismail Abdullah Al Gargawi, H.E. Sami Saeed Salim Al Nu'aimi, H.E. Mohammed Abdul Karim Gulfar, H.E. Ahmed Mohammed Ali Al Kamali, H.E. Ahmed Adullah Amer Al Falasi, Sheikh Abdullah bin Majid Al Al Qasimi, H.E. General Ahmed Nasir Al Raisi, H.E. Khalfan Ali Khalfan Al Nu'aimi, Engineer Dawood Abdul Rahman Al Hajri, H.E. Mohammed Jasim Hasan Sajwani, H.E. Naser Abdul Razak Al Razooki, H.E. Sultan bin Al Sheikh Mohammed bin Mugrin, Sheikh Hamid bin Khadem bin Butti Al Hamid, Sheikh Engineer Salim bin Sultan Al Qasimi, H.E. Dr. Suleiman Abdul Karim Al Faheem, H.E. Mohammed Abdul Ghafoor Al Khaja, H.E. Usama Ahmed Abdullah Al Sha'afar, H.E. Abdul Mohsin Fahd Rashid Al Dosari, General Abdullah Salim bin Nasreh Al Amri, H.E. Lt. Colonel Nasir Rashid Ali Al Ghaithi, H.E. Dr. Omer Abdul Aziz Al Hai.

Creative Sports Award: In non-NOC news from the UAE, a new award to recognise creativity in sport on and off the field will expand from the Arab world to the global sports community next year. At a press conference in Kuwait City on March 12, organisers of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Creative Sports Award said it would be open to all-comers in 2010, following its local and regional launch this year.

Prizes will be awarded in three categories - individuals, teams of no fewer than three members, and organisations. There will be total prize money of US\$1.5 million.

Under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the award started this year and provides a vital incentive and motivation towards innovation among players, administrators, technicians and corporations along with other parties in the sports field.

Uzbekistan



The 14th General Assembly of the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan took place in the NOC Uzbekistan's Conference Hall on May 8. The General Assembly was attended by individual and collective members of the NOC, representatives of National Olympic Sports Federations, other recognised sports federations, organisations and clubs, and athletes. Among 95 valid NOC members, 86 attended the General Assembly to secure a quorum.

Mr. Malik Babaev was unanimously elected to the post of NOC President. The 11-strong Executive Board was also approved unanimously.



Photo courtesy of Uzbekistan NOC

* Olympic Day 2009 took place on Sunday, May 24, in the National Park named after Alisher Navoi in Tashkent. Athletes and sports fans from all regions of Uzbekistan took part in the preliminary stages of the Olympic Day 2009, and over 1,500 participated in the final stage. There were 20 runs of distances between 0.5 and 1 mile in age categories from 6 to 80. The youngest runners were from Tashkent city child day-care center No 546.

Contact us!

Sporting Asia is for you - the 45 NOCs. Send your news and activities for our website and newsletter to: Jeremy Walker, Editor, Sporting Asia, at: jeremy@ocasia.org

Foundation stone laid for Muscat Beach Games

A celebration was held on May 23, under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, Chairman of the Muscat Asian Beach Games Organising Committee, to unveil the foundation stone at Al-Musannah Sports City, the site for the Muscat 2010 Games.

The celebration, set in an open-air tent on the beach in Al-Musannah, kicked off with a live performance from a local folk band. A reading from the Holy Quran was followed by three Omani poets reciting from their works.

MABGOC Director General Eng. Habib Macki welcomed the guests and said Oman would benefit in many ways by hosting the Beach Games, including tourism, sport, and a legacy of infrastructure.

H.H. Sayyid Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, together with the Chairperson of project manager Omran, Her Excellency Dr. Rajiha bint Abdul Ameer Ali, signed an official commitment to complete the project as scheduled (pictured right).

The evening culminated with H.H. Sayyid Haitham bin Tarik Al Said unveiling the foundation stone inscribed with a message of cooperation, unity and friendship.

* A few days earlier, MABGOC made a site visit to Musannah. With a wealth of knowledge in organising Olympic and Asian Games events, the group was comprised of professionals from various countries, including Canada, Greece, the Philippines and Indonesia.

The one-million square metre site in Musannah, 70 km from Muscat, features Olympic-quality sporting facilities, an Athletes' Village, a four-star hotel, a 400-berth marina, a range of restaurants and shops. The project is on track for completion by July 2010, five months before the Games will take place in early December.



Martial Arts Games set for August 1-9

The dates for the 1st Asian Martial Arts Games in Thailand have been settled after weeks of discussions between the parties involved.

Originally scheduled for April 25-May 3, the Martial Arts Games were postponed over security fears due to civil unrest in the Thai capital with the political rally of the red shirts.

The Games, featuring nine sports, were rearranged for June 6-14, but clashed with other international events in Thailand.

The local organising committee and the OCA eventually agreed on the new dates: Saturday, August 1, to Sunday, August 9.

The Games will be held in Bangkok and Suphanburi under the



1st ASIAN MARTIAL ARTS GAMES
BANGKOK 2009

slogan "The Games of Spirit - The Land of Smiles."

Organisers are expecting between 1,000 and 1,500 athletes and officials from the 45 Asian NOCs.

As a result of the postponement of the Martial Arts Games, the OCA could not hold their 54th Executive Board meeting on April 25 and 28th General Assembly on April 26 in Bangkok as planned. Instead, the

two big events will take place during the 1st Asian Youth Games in Singapore, from June 29 to July 7.

The Executive Board will meet on June 30, the day before the General Assembly on July 1.

The various OCA committees will now gather in Singapore on June 29.

Cocachin sets sail from Kuwait on Road of Asia



Drums and sword dances from Kuwait and a Chinese dragon performance greeted onlookers and guests alike at the launch of the "Road of Asia" project in Kuwait on March 11, before boys and girls from local schools took part in a fun run to promote the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

The Cocachin boat set sail from Kuwait along the Maritime Silk Route through Asia and is set to arrive in Guangzhou on November 12, 2009 - exactly one year before the start of the next Asiad.

The OCA President, H.E. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah, welcomed the guests, and then helped present the fun run medals along with International Olympic Committee President Dr. Jacques Rogge and Major General Faisal M. Aljazzaf, Chairman and Director General of the State of Kuwait's Public Authority for Youth and Sports.

Asian NOCs are promoting the "Road of Asia" project with various activities, including fun runs, trade fairs and press conferences to inform local media of the preparations for the 16th Asiad.

Youth to the fore in Singapore



The furry "FRASIA" mascot is out and about, the theme song is in the air, the torch relay route is finalised, and Singapore is ready

to welcome the OCA for the first sports event of the year.

Running from June 29 to July 7, the first Asian Youth Games will feature 1,100 athletes aged from 14 to 17 in 90 events across nine sports: aquatics (swimming and diving), athletics, FIBA33 (3-on-3 basketball), beach volleyball, bowling, football, sailing, shooting and table tennis.

Not only will the Games identify the Asian stars of the future, they will also serve as the perfect dress rehearsal for the first IOC Summer Youth Olympic Games in August 2010.

Teo Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence and President of the Singapore National Olympic Council, says it is an honour for Singapore to have the privilege of hosting the inaugural Asian Youth Games with the OCA.

"The Asian Youth Games will provide the opportunity for emerging athletes from Asia to meet and build lasting friendships through friendly competition based on the Olympic values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect," said Mr. Teo.

Before the action begins, here are a few highlights behind the scenes:

Organising Committee SAYGOC will be bringing the Games to the community through the first-ever Asian Youth Games Torch Relay. With the theme "Igniting Sporting Passion in Asia's Youth", the event will be held over two days: the Community Leg on June 28 and the School Leg on June 29.

More than 180 torch-bearers and over 70,000 participants from all walks of life are expected to be part of this event.

Swissotel The Stamford will serve as the Games Village. Centrally located, the hotel will be able to better support SAYGOC by providing value added services such as security support, language services, traffic control within the hotel and providing tour and travel arrangements for all AYG participants.

SAYGOC had been seeking alternative venues for the Games Village following constructive feedback during the Chefs De Mission meeting in March.

Coming up next...

The next edition of Sporting Asia will be published in September. Contents will include:

- ✪ 1st Asian Youth Games in Singapore
- ✪ 1st Asian Martial Arts Games in Bangkok
- ✪ 28th OCA General Assembly
- ✪ NOC news round-up
- ✪ Games updates

The official lion mascot and theme song were unveiled on March 19 by Guest-of-Honour Mr Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports & Ministry of Transport, at Velocity@Novena Square.

The public was invited to participate in a "Name the Mascot" contest, jointly organised by The Straits Times and SAYGOC. The name FRASIA - a play on the phrase "Friends of Asia" - was chosen from some 1,470 entries during the week-long competition and was announced on April 15.

The catchy theme song, titled "Asia's Youth, Our Future", features music composed by the renowned Iskandar Ismail and lyrics by Jose Raymond (Singapore Sports Council) and Mr Hoo Cher Liek (Ministry of Education). The song will be sung by Singapore's very own youths, Nathan Hartono and Lian Kim Selby, JC2 students of Anglo-Chinese Junior College.

Visit www.ayg2009.com.sg for more information.



Diary of Events



2009

June 29: OCA Finance Committee, OCA Sports and Environment Committee, OCA Athletes Committee, OCA Rules Committee, OCA Sports Committee, all in Singapore.

June 29-July 7: 1st Asian Youth Games, Singapore.

June 30: 54th OCA Executive Board, Singapore.

July 1: 28th OCA General Assembly, Singapore.

August 1-9: 1st Asian Martial Arts Games, Bangkok, Thailand.

Oct. 30-Nov. 8: 3rd Asian Indoor Games, Hanoi, Vietnam.

2010

Nov 12-27: 16th Asian Games, Guangzhou, China.

December: 2nd Asian Beach Games, Muscat, Oman (dates to be confirmed).

2011

Jan. 30-Feb.6: 7th Asian Winter Games, Astana-Almaty, Kazakhstan.

