BRAVO KOREA
PYEONGCHANG RISES TO THE OCCASION

Winter Olympics 2018
Special Edition

Asia’s Roll of Honour
Asia’s 10 Golden Moments
Asian NOCs make their mark
Sapporo 2017 stars shine in 2018
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Front cover:
Korea’s Choi Min-jeong celebrates her stunning victory in the women’s 1,500m short track speed skating competition at Gangneung Ice Arena on Saturday, February 17. The 19-year-old PyeongChang poster girl would add a second gold medal in the women’s 3,000m relay three days later. Photo: Yonhap News.
First of all I would like to say a big “thank you” and “congratulations” to Korea for a wonderful Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

Korea embraced the Olympic spirit and presented a truly memorable Winter Olympics that impressed the athletes, officials and spectators attending the Games and also the millions of people watching on TV around the world.

The images were spectacular and the action was always varied and always exciting. In short, PyeongChang 2018 was a credit to Korea, Asia and the whole of the Olympic Movement.

It also provided the perfect start to the “Asian Era”, with Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 next in line to host Summer and Winter Games, respectively.

These are proud days for the Asian continent as we welcome the world and impress the world with our organisational ability, our sports infrastructure and our operations and management expertise.

We are confident that Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 will continue to project an innovative, modern Asia while also preserving the rich traditions and cultural heritage of each country.

The Koreans, Japanese and Chinese authorities are working together to exchange knowledge and information in order to present the best Olympics possible, and this three-way communication and cooperation is another positive and powerful message to the world.

PyeongChang 2018 once again showed how sport and the Olympic Games can unite people at times of conflict and heightened political tension, specifically, on this occasion, on the Korean peninsula. The two sides of the divided peninsula put their differences aside to march together in the Opening Ceremony under the Korean Unification Flag and compete together as one team in the women’s ice hockey competition.

The Olympic Movement thanks DPR Korea and the Republic of Korea for showing such unity and solidarity under the global Olympic spotlight and sincerely hopes that this gesture will lead to permanent peace on the peninsula.

Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah
President, Olympic Council of Asia
President, Association of National Olympic Committees
Chairman, IOC Olympic Solidarity Commission
GANGNEUNG SHINES AS GAMES’ SILENT PARTNER

Although PyeongChang was the official host city of the 2018 Winter Olympics, Gangneung played its full part in the outstanding success of the Games as the silent partner in the hosting stakes.

Located some 50km from PyeongChang’s scattered Mountain Cluster, Gangneung Olympic Park provided an enjoyable and festive day out for the family: a one-stop Olympic shop.

There were plenty of food kiosks, gift shops, exhibits, photo opportunities and showrooms for the likes of sponsors Alibaba and Samsung down in the Coastal Cluster of competition venues.

These venues became synonymous with success:

- Gangneung Ice Arena, where Korea won three of its five gold medals on the short track and which also hosted the fan-favourite figure skating;
- Gangneung Oval, which produced some incredible nights for Korea’s speed skating stars;
- Gangneung Curling Centre, where the amazing story of Korea’s “Garlic Girls” unfolded day by day, all the way through to the last morning of the Games.

The climate, too, was milder by the sea, with glorious sunshine on most days to counter a biting, icy wind. As one taxi driver stated, it was still winter in PyeongChang but already spring in Gangneung.

The history books will record that PyeongChang was the host city of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games – but Gangneung should never be forgotten for the environment and atmosphere it created and for the golden memories.

Korea’s new figure skating hopeful, Choi Da-bin, certainly thrived on the electric atmosphere and energy inside the Gangneung Ice Arena.

The 18-year-old Sapporo 2017 Asian Winter Games champion scored 67.77 points in her short programme and 131.49 in her free skate for a total of 199.26 and seventh place in the ladies’ single skate.

Coming into the Games, the hopes and expectations within the Korean camp for Choi were a Top 10 finish, but she excelled herself in front of her own supporters to earn the pride of a nation and of her idol – retired figure skating legend Kim Yu-na.
### FINAL MEDAL TABLE

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**Legend**
- : Gold Medal
- : Silver Medal
- : Bronze Medal

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### PyeongChang 2018

**Opening Ceremony:**
Friday, February 9

**Opened by:**
Moon Jae-in, President, Republic of Korea

**Closing Ceremony:**
Sunday, February 25

**Closed by:**
Thomas Bach, President, IOC

**Venue:**
PyeongChang Olympic Stadium, Gangwon Province

**Teams:**
92 (91 NOCs plus OAR)

**Athletes:**
2,920

**Sports:**
15

**Events:**
102

**Debut NOCs (6):**
Malaysia, Singapore, Ecuador, Eritrea, Kosovo, Nigeria.

**Slogan:**
Passion. Connected.

**Vision:**
New Horizons

**Media Accreditation**

- **Press:**
  2,710

- **Broadcasting:**
  10,898

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Asia at PyeongChang 2018

OPENING CEREMONY AT PYEONGCHANG

Candles at the cultural performance.

The striking white tiger.

The dove of peace and harmony for PyeongChang 2018.

Fireworks light up the night sky.
Performers produce the Korean Wave.

Korea’s Figure Skating “Queen” Kim Yu-na prepares to light the cauldron.

The cauldron is lit - PyeongChang 2018 is open for business.

Five children told the Time Journey.
The Koreans did not have long to wait to find their first hero of the Winter Olympics. On Saturday, February 10, the first day of the Games, Lim Hyo-jun won the men’s 1,500m short track speed skating title at Gangneung Ice Arena in an Olympic Record time of 2:10.485.

In an unprecedented nine-man starting line-up for the final, the 21-year-old Korean flyer managed to stay out of trouble before racing to a memorable victory to give the home nation the perfect start. Talk about Saturday Night Fever!
Korea’s self-styled “Iron Man” lived up to his star billing by winning the men’s skeleton on the first day of Lunar New Year - Friday, February 16. He became the first Asian athlete to win a medal in this daredevil, head-first sliding sport.

Yun, 23, finished 16th on his Olympic debut in Sochi 2014 but proved how practice makes perfect by producing a series of gung-ho displays over two race days at the PyeongChang Sliding Centre. He was the fastest in all four runs for a total time of 3:20.55.
Asia at PyeongChang 2018

GOLDEN MOMENTS: NO. 3
YUZURU HANYU (JAPAN)

- Japan’s Ice Prince pin-up became the first skater in 66 years to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals when he followed up his triumph at Sochi 2014 with another imperious display in Korea.

- The 23-year-old Hanyu, whose PyeongChang preparations had been seriously affected by a right ankle injury suffered last November, won the short programme with 111.68 points and made no mistake in the free skate with a score of 206.17 for a total of 317.85. No doubt he was one of the brightest stars of the Winter Olympics.
GOLDEN MOMENTS: NO. 4
CHOI MIN-JEONG (KOREA)

- The 19-year-old Korean short tracker had been one of the “faces” of the Games in the build-up to PyeongChang 2018 - and did not let down her army of fans by winning the women’s 1,500m title in thrilling style.

- It was another Saturday Night Special for Korea at Gangneung Ice Arena on February 17 as the world record-holder showed tremendous skating skills and acceleration to sustain a three-lap surge around the outside and win gloriously in 2:24.948. Sensational!
At the age of 31 and in her third Winter Olympics, speed skater Nao Kodaira became Japan’s oldest Olympic Winter Games gold medallist when winning the 500m title at Gangneung Oval on Sunday, February 18.

After a disappointing Sochi 2014 campaign, Kodaira left Japan to live and train in the speed skating hotbed of the Netherlands – and the experience proved priceless as she won at her favoured distance in a new Olympic Record of 36.94 seconds.

GOLDEN MOMENTS: NO. 5
NAO KODAIRA (JAPAN)

Nao Kodaira wins the women’s 500m speed skating title (Photo: The Japan Times)

Nao Kodaira became Japan’s oldest Winter Olympic champion at 31 years (Photo: The Japan Times)
On another crazy night at the Gangneung Ice Arena, the Koreans won an action-packed and controversial 3,000m Relay in 4:07.361. Their final four was Shim Suk-hee, Choi Min-jeong, winning her second gold medal of the Games, Kim Yejin and Kim A-lang. It was Korea’s sixth gold medal in this event.

China thought they had won the silver medal, only to be disqualified – along with Canada - long after the race for impeding. This promoted Italy into the silver medal position and the Netherlands, who had not even competed in the final but had won the B final in a world record 4:03.471, into bronze.
On a memorable night at the vast Gangneung Oval, world record-holders Japan went head to head with the “Oranje” speed skating machine from the Netherlands, the reigning Olympic champions, in the final of the ladies' team pursuit – and won in pulsating fashion.

Japan’s trio in the final - sisters Nana and Miho Takagi and Ayano Sato - produced a fluid performance in perfect synchronicity to win in an Olympic Record 2:53.89, eclipsing the previous mark of 2:55.61 set by the Dutch two days earlier. The fourth member of Japan’s pursuit team was Ayaka Kikuchi, who helped Japan beat Canada in the semi-finals.
GOLDEN MOMENTS: NO. 8
WU DAJING (CHINA)

- On Thursday, February 22 - the last night of short track speed skating at Gangneung Ice Arena - Wu Dajing finally earned China’s first gold medal of the Games with a series of commanding post-to-post victories in the men’s 500m.

- To the delight and relief of the proud pockets of flag-waving Chinese scattered around the arena, Wu dominated the final after a blistering start gave him the lead at the first corner from the inside lane. To make up for lost time, Wu, 23, won gold in a World Record time of 39.584 seconds, beating the 39.800 he had set earlier in the evening. Wu Dajing – the Pride of China!
What a night! What a race! What a star! In the first Ladies’ Mass Start in Olympic Speed Skating history, Japan’s Nana Takagi produced an astonishing burst of speed in the closing stages of the 16-lapper to win gold with 60 race points from the frantic fourth and final sprint to the line.

Nana, the elder of the two Takagi sisters in the Japan team and often in the shadow of her younger sister Miho, became the first Japanese athlete to win two gold medals at a Winter Olympics since 1998. She had won gold in the Team Pursuit three days earlier.
Shortly after Nana Takagi had won the Ladies’ Mass Start Final for Japan, local hero Lee Seung-hoon surged to a truly astonishing victory in the men’s event to spark chaos in the stands and wild celebrations from a jam-packed house.

The 29-year-old speed skating heart-throb saved all his energy for the final sprint and timed it to perfection to win his second Olympic title following his 10,000m gold at Vancouver eight years earlier. Lee’s epic race in the first Men’s Mass Start of the Winter Olympics brought the speed skating competition to a triumphant close for the hosts amidst incredible scenes at Gangneung Oval. Talk about Mass Hysteria!
Korea

**Gold**
- Lim Hyo-jun, Short Track Speed Skating, Men’s 1,500m, February 10
- Yun Sung-bin, Men’s Skeleton, February 16
- Choi Min-jeong, Short Track Speed Skating, Ladies’ 1,500m, February 17
- Ladies’ 3,000m relay (Choi Min-jeong, Kim A-lang, Shim Suk-hee, Kim Ye-jin, Lee Yu-bin), Short Track Speed Skating, February 20.
- Lee Seung-hoon, Speed Skating, Men’s Mass Start, February 24

**Silver**
- Lee Sang-hwa, Speed Skating, Ladies’ 500m, February 18
- Cha Min-kyu, Speed Skating, Men’s 500m, February 19
- Men’s Team Pursuit (Lee Seung-hoon, Chung Jae-won, Kim Min-seok), Speed Skating, February 21
- Hwang Dae-heon, Short Track Speed Skating, Men’s 500m, February 22
- Lee Sang-ho, Snowboard, Men’s Parallel Giant Slalom, February 24
- Kim Bo-reum, Speed Skating, Ladies’ Mass Start, February 24
- Women’s Curling (Kim Eun-jung - skip, Kim Kyeong-ae, Kim Seon-yeong, Kim Yeong-mi, Kim Cho-hi), February 25

**Bronze**
- Kim Min-seok, Speed Skating, Men’s 1,500m, February 13
- Seo Yi-ra, Short Track Speed Skating, Men’s 1,000m, February 17
- Lim Hyo-jun, Short Track Speed Skating, Men’s 500m, February 22
- Kim Tae-yun, Speed Skating, Men’s 1,000m, February 23

China

**Gold**
- Wu Dajing, Short Track Speed Skating, Men’s 500m, February 22

**Silver**
- Liu Jiayu, Snowboard, Ladies’ Halfpipe, February 13
- Sui Wenjing/Han Cong, Figure Skating, Pairs, February 15
- Zhang Xin, Freestyle Skiing, Ladies’ Aerials, February 16
Gold
- Yuzuru Hanyu, Figure Skating, Men’s Single, February 17
- Yuzuru Hanyu, Figure Skating, Men’s Short Program, February 17
- Nao Kodaira, Speed Skating, Ladies’ 1,000m, February 14
- Akito Watabe, Nordic Combined, Individual Gundersen NH/10km, February 14
- Shoma Uno, Figure Skating, Men’s Single, February 17

Silver
- Miho Takagi, Speed Skating, Ladies’ 1,500m, February 12
- Ayumu Hirano, Snowboard, Men’s Halfpipe, February 14
- Nao Kodaira, Speed Skating, Ladies’ 1,000m, February 14
- Akito Watabe, Nordic Combined, Individual Gundersen NH/10km, February 14
- Shoma Uno, Figure Skating, Men’s Single, February 17

Bronze
- Daichi Hara, Freestyle Skiing, Men’s Moguls, February 12
- Sara Takanashi, Ski Jumping, Ladies’ Normal Hill Individual, February 12
- Miho Takagi, Speed Skating, Ladies’ 1,000m, February 14
- Women’s Curling (Satsuki Fujisawa, Chinami Yoshida, Yumi Suzuki, Yuriya Yoshida, Mari Motohashi), February 24.

Japan

Kazakhstan

Bronze
- Yulia Galysheva, Freestyle Skiing, Ladies’ Moguls, February 11.
MAGIC MOMENTS: NO. 1
UNIFIED KOREA IN THE OPENING CEREMONY

What seemed unthinkable, if not impossible, just a few weeks prior to PyeongChang 2018 came to a dream reality at the Opening Ceremony on February 9.

On a bitterly cold night at PyeongChang Olympic Stadium, the crowds warmly welcomed the National Olympic Committee delegations from around the world as they joined the Athletes’ Parade in the order of the Korean alphabet.

The biggest cheer of the night, however, was reserved for the last delegation – the unified athletes from the Republic of Korea and DPR Korea marching together under the unification flag of the blue silhouette of the Korean Peninsula on a white background.

High in the VIP area, IOC President Thomas Bach, South Korea’s President, Moon Jae-in, and his wife, Kim Jung-sook, were joined by Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un.

President Bach spoke of the “unique power of sport to unite people” and thanked the two NOCs for marching together.

“All the athletes around me, all the spectators here in the stadium and all Olympic fans watching around the world, we are all touched by this wonderful gesture. We all join and support you in your message of peace.”
Although the two Koreas marched together at the Opening Ceremony, the only sport in which they competed together was women’s ice hockey, with 12 players from DPRK being added to the 23 from host country Korea.

The joint team (COR) suffered two heavy defeats in their opening Group B games, losing 8-0 to both Switzerland and Sweden, before the all-Asia contest against Japan on Wednesday, February 14 at Kwandong Hockey Centre.

With two groups of North Korean cheerleaders in the stadium, the place erupted at 9:31 of the second period when Korea scored their first goal of the tournament.

Randi Heesoo Griffin, a 29-year-old Harvard University graduate from the United States, was eligible to play for the team due to her Korean mother – but never expected this moment in the spotlight.

“I got lucky,” she said. “I am not a hero.”

She certainly was a hero to the Korean supporters, especially the North Korean cheerleaders, who abandoned their well-drilled movements, chants and melodic folk songs for a while to go crazy like the rest of the spectators when the puck bobbed into Japan’s net.

Even though Korea lost the game 4-1, that first goal for COR was a truly memorable and magical moment for everyone there.
PyeongChang 2018 witnessed one of the most moving moments in Olympic Games history when two speed skating superstars from rival countries embraced warmly in a genuine show of friendship and respect.

After Japan’s Nao Kodaira had won the women’s 500m title in an Olympic Record time of 36.94 seconds, she interrupted her lap of honour to turn and face the runner-up, silver medallist Lee Sang-hwa of Korea.

Lee, bidding for her third straight gold medal in this event, had seen her hopes dashed by the Japanese flyer and was overcome with emotion in front of her own fans in her farewell race at Gangneung Oval.

Kodaira stopped on the home straight, turned and waited for Lee to skate into her open arms. The pair then hugged and chatted before resuming their circuit of the oval, each carrying the flag of their country.

It was a heart-warming and, indeed, beautiful moment by representatives of two countries with a troubled past, and was appreciated and acknowledged by all sides.

“We have competed against each other for many years,” Kodaira said of the moment. “I really respect her and I really look up to her as a human being and a skater. She is my friend. Sport can make the world one together, it’s simple.”
Asia at PyeongChang 2018

MAGIC MOMENTS: NO. 4
FIGURE SKATING HIGHLIGHTS OLYMPIC SPIRIT

As the local bus left the terminal at Gyeongpo Beach, heading for Gangneung Olympic Park, there was a buzz of anticipation and excitement in the cold morning air.

At each of the stops along the route, the front door would open and passengers from a variety of countries would ask: “Ice Arena?”

When the driver nodded his approval, a new load of passengers would clamber on and make their way down the bus. All seats were taken at the terminal, and it’s standing room only for the wave after wave of skating fans.

The journey was short, and when the announcement “Ice Arena” was made in Korean and then in English, the bus emptied into the glorious sunshine of early spring in Gangwon Province.

All roads this day led to Gangneung Ice Arena for the men’s figure skating free programme – one of the highlights of any Winter Olympics.

Inside the arena, figure skating fans display the best qualities of any sports-lover. If a skater falls, the crowd cheers – not because a rival may benefit from the mistake but to give the stricken skater more support and encouragement. After all, one minute on the lonely, unforgiving ice can feel like one year when things are not going well.

When the skater lands the next jump cleanly, the applause is even louder to acknowledge the recovery and fortitude. No matter what the country, the fans are the same for all skaters, although naturally they have their favourites.

A day at the figure skating cannot be beaten for entertainment, colour, music and incredible technical skill and artistry, as well as displaying the epitome of the Olympic spirit on and off the ice.

“Ice Arena?”

You bet!

Uzbekistan’s Misha Ge, a two-time Winter Olympian at Sochi and PyeongChang, is one of the most popular skaters on the circuit.

Ice skating fans don’t come any keener than the Japanese. Here they flood Gangneung Ice Arena with Hinomaru.
MAGIC MOMENTS: NO. 5
KOREA’S ‘GARLIC GIRLS’ CAPTIVATE THE NATION

Before the start of the Winter Olympics in Korea, curling was not for everyone.

It is now – and it’s all thanks to Korea’s “Garlic Girls”!

Not only did the women’s team win the first curling medal for Korea in Winter Olympics history, a silver, they captivated the host nation and became household names on their remarkable and totally unexpected run to the final.

In the end, the vastly more experienced Sweden beat Korea 8-3 in the gold medal match on the last morning of the Games, but nothing could detract from the achievement of the “Garlic Girls” - so named because four of the five team members hail from Uiseong, a town famous for growing garlic.

Furthermore, all five members have the family name Kim, leading to them being dubbed Team Kim.

The main quartet of skip/captain Kim Eun-jung, Kim Seon-yeong and sisters Kim Kyeong-ae and Kim Yeong-mi turned curling into must-see TV, with national broadcasters often cutting away from other sports to show these curlers at work.

Another fascinating fact about the team's march to the podium was that all curlers handed in their cell phones before the Olympics so they could cut themselves off from the outside world and stay focused on the competition.

“I really don’t know how famous we are, but I could feel that the fans were a lot more raucous today than they were in our first match,” said skip Kim, after the final.

“We’ve received letters and gifts from our fans and we really appreciate that. Our popularity is one thing, and we’re just grateful that so many people have taken an interest in curling.”

It looks like the “Garlic Girls” will be much more than Flavour of the Month.
Short track speed skater Cheyenne Goh made history at PyeongChang 2018 by becoming Singapore’s first Winter Olympian.

Cheyenne, 18, competed in the third heat of the women’s 1,500 metres and finished fifth of six competitors when only the top three advanced to the semi-finals.

Talking about her overall experience after the race, Cheyenne said: “I think the whole thing has been pretty overwhelming and super cool and amazing. I have really enjoyed it. It is definitely really special and a huge honour.”

Asked if she felt under pressure because she was Singapore’s first Winter Olympian, Cheyenne replied: “I think there is a little bit of pressure but I don’t think that’s a bad thing. It made being here more special I guess and I am really happy to be part of this.”

Looking back on the race, Cheyenne added: “I think my race went all right and I am fairly happy, even though I was back. I tried something new in this race and having this experience is good.”

As for competing in a speed skating hotbed such as Korea, Cheyenne said: “This is definitely like a huge sport in Korea and the crowd is always super-pumped I guess and that is really cool.”

Cheyenne, who was born in Singapore but has lived in Canada since she was four years old, is now hoping her appearance in Korea has given winter sports more exposure in Singapore and that youngsters will try short track, figure skating or ice hockey in the indoor rinks and join her as a Winter Olympian, hopefully in Beijing in 2022.
Friday, February 16 marked the first day of the Lunar New Year around the world.

But the festivities had to wait for a while in Malaysia – because Julian Yee was becoming the country’s first Winter Olympian.

Julian, whose Chinese name is Yee Zhi Jie, took part in the men’s figure skating at Gangneung Ice Arena and scored a season’s best 73.58 points in his short programme.

With the top 24 of 30 skaters qualifying for the free skate the next day, Julian was agonisingly close and finished 25th, just 1.15 points behind Germany’s Paul Fentz in 24th place with 74.73 points.

Julian, 20, said it would have been a bonus to qualify for the free skate as he had achieved his goal by not having any regrets, and described his overall experience as “definitely a great moment for me.”

Malaysia could feel proud of his performance, which was shown live on TV back home on the first morning of the Lunar New Year.

“I think a lot of people, especially family and friends, they would put Chinese New Year on hold for now, watch me on TV, give me as much support as they can and after that they carry on with the festivities, so I am very thankful for that,” he said.

“It’s just great to see the flag go up there.”

The Malaysian flag was also flying high at the Yongpyong Alpine Centre, where Julian’s team-mate, Jeffrey Webb, 19, became Malaysia’s first Winter Olympian on snow by competing in the giant slalom and slalom.

After negotiating both runs of the giant slalom for an overall placing of 68th in a field of 110, Jeffrey did not finish the first run of the more technically-challenging slalom.

Still, he said he had enjoyed the camaraderie of his fellow Asian alpine skiers, as he knew some of them from the circuit in North America and also from the OCA’s 8th Asian Winter Games in Sapporo in February 2017.
It was not only the joint march of Korea and DPR Korea in the Opening Ceremony that brought Asia into the global spotlight at PyeongChang 2018; nor the fact that the Republic of Korea was hosting its second Olympic Games after Seoul 1988.

And while the multiple medals of Asia’s “Big Three” – Korea, Japan and China – all brought Top 20 finishes in the final rankings of the 292 teams, there was much more to celebrate and embrace from an Asian perspective on the snow and ice of the two major competition clusters.

A total of 19 Asian NOCs took part with 451 athletes – and all five zones of the OCA were represented.

Not surprisingly, East Asia was top of the list with seven NOCs: host Korea, DPR Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong, China.

It was a surprise, however, that totally tropical South-East Asia came next with five NOCs. Timor-Leste and Thailand were back on the snow, and debutants Singapore and Malaysia joined the Philippines in ice sports.

This highlights the development of winter sports in the SEA region, and justifies the decision to include ice sports in the 29th SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur last August. “People thought we were crazy,” said Dato’ Low Beng Choo, Secretary General of the Olympic Council of Malaysia, on the eve of PyeongChang 2018.

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Iran represented Central Asia; India and Pakistan came from South Asia and Lebanon was Asia’s sole NOC from West Asia.

Iran’s flag-bearer Samaneh Beyrami Baher leads the delegation into the opening ceremony. (Getty Images)

### NOC FLAG-BEARERS FOR OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONY

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SUPER COOL ARABELLA: At just 16 years old, alpine skier Arabella Ng became the first athlete from Hong Kong, China NOC to compete in the Winter Olympics on snow, as opposed to ice. In the giant slalom, Arabella completed both runs in a combined time of 2:50.54 and placed 56th of 81 entries, but did not finish her first run in the slalom. “Super cool,” she replied, when asked how it felt to be Hong Kong’s alpine skiing pioneer at the Yongpyong Alpine Centre.

KARIM’S BEIJING TARGET: Pakistan’s Muhammad Karim had mixed emotions on his second Olympic appearance. “I am happy with the giant slalom,” he said, on completing both runs for 72nd position, “but not happy with the slalom because, unfortunately, I could not finish. I am upset for my team and my country. It happens like this.” Karim, 22, is now aiming for a hat-trick of Winter Olympic appearances at Beijing 2022 but knows his preparations must be better. “We did not have snow in Pakistan for the last two years,” he lamented.

MAN WITH A MISSION: While France-based alpine skier Yohan Goutt was taking part in his second Winter Olympics for his mother’s native Timor, Timor-Leste NOC Secretary General Laurentino Guterres was also putting his relatively new country on the map. “Many of the countries do not know where Timor is located,” said Laurentino. “Some athletes and officials think it is in Africa, and others think it still belongs to Indonesia. We have to share that now we are an independent country.”

YES WE CAN: Figure skater Michael Martinez is rightly proud of his efforts at not just one but two Winter Olympics. “I did my part,” he said. “I was able to do what they’re saying that ‘no, you can’t do it…you are Philippines, you won’t be able to do it…it’s a tropical country’. But I was like, ‘you know what, it doesn’t matter!’ So when I did the Sochi (2014) I was able to open doors and I was able to open their eyes that, you know, it doesn’t matter, you can do it. So I was really happy that I was able to inspire a lot of athletes, especially back home, and they were able to produce a hockey team. Now they are speed skating. There’s a lot of things going on there.”
ONE IN A BILLION: Indian luger Shiva Keshavan competed in his sixth and final Winter Olympics after making his debut at Nagano in 1998 aged 16. Training on a highway in the Himalayas, Shiva told the Olympic Channel: “There is no perfect life but you still put up with it because you are doing this for something you love.” Shiva, 36, finished 34th in his farewell appearance. He was, truly, one in a billion – a luger in India.

HIGH HOPES IN MONGOLIA: The President of Mongolia NOC, Dr Demchigjav Zagdsuren, was a busy man in PyeongChang – supporting his two athletes in cross-country skiing, working on winter sports exchange programmes with other NOCs and compiling a detailed technical report on the performance of Asian athletes as Chairman of the OCA Information and Statistics Committee. Mongolia is aiming to send athletes in three sports – short track, biathlon and cross-country – to Beijing 2022.

MAN FOR ALL SEASONS: Chinese Taipei speed skater Sung Ching-yang is equally at home in a summer or winter games. Sung, 25, finished 34th in the men’s 500m speed skating at Gangneung Oval in his second Winter Olympics appearance – eight years after winning two gold medals in roller sports sprint events at the Guangzhou 2010 Asian Games as an in-line skater. The versatile skater certainly enjoys life in the fast lane.

MONGOLIA NOC President Dr Demchigjav Zagdsuren at the PyeongChang Athletes’ Village.

MOGULS MARVEL: On only the second day of the games, freestyle skier Yulia Galysheva put Kazakhstan on the medals board with a bronze in the women’s moguls at Phoenix Snow Park. The 25-year-old “Master of Sport – International Class” back home has adopted the philosophy “Go forward in life” – and this positive attitude took her all the way to the Olympic podium after finishing 11th at Vancouver 2010 and seventh at Sochi 2014.
The OCA’s 8th Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan, in February 2017 were already deemed a huge success before attention turned to PyeongChang 2018 one year later.

Following the results in PyeongChang, however, the Asian Winter Games have taken on an even greater significance. Many of the stars of PyeongChang 2018 had enjoyed huge success at Sapporo and at the speed skating venue of Obihiro the previous year, reflecting the high level of the Asian Winter Games in terms of organisation, infrastructure and the world-class ability of the athletes.

Look no further than the figure skating competition at Gangneung Ice Arena for proof of this. Sapporo AWG champion Shoma Uno went on to take the silver medal in Korea behind his compatriot, Yuzuru Hanyu, in a Japanese 1-2, while Sapporo AWG silver medallist Jin Boyang of China was a swashbuckling fourth in PyeongChang.

Sapporo AWG women’s champion Choi Da-bin of Korea had the impossible task of following the retired Olympic figure skating legend Kim Yu-na - “Queen” Yu-na - and rose to the occasion with a sensational seventh-place finish in front of her own fans.

This was a remarkable effort against the Russians, Japanese and best of the rest from Europe and North America, and suggested that Choi, 18, is heading in the right direction.

In short track speed skating, Sapporo AWG champions Wu Dajing (China) and Choi Min-jeong (Korea) both won individual Olympic gold, in men’s 500m and women’s 1,500m respectively, while the speed skating champions from Obihiro lit up the world one year later at Gangneung Oval.

Japan’s female speed skating team excelled in Korea, with Nana Takagi winning two gold medals, her younger sister Miho picking up a gold, silver and bronze and Nao Kodaira winning her first Olympic gold, in the 500m. Japan had won six of the seven speed skating titles at Obihiro.

In men’s speed skating, Korean medal machine Lee Seung-hoon – with four gold at Obihiro – ended the Winter Olympics speed skating competition with an heroic victory in the first men’s mass start race.

Sapporo 2017 made a big impression on athletes from all Asian countries, and pointed the way forward to the Winter Olympics.

None more so than Kazakhstan’s Aiza Mambekova, who believes her appearance in the 2017 AWG figure skating competition played a big part in her Olympic preparations.

Aiza, who finished eighth in Sapporo, said: “I really enjoyed being in Japan and I really want to go back there in the future. I really like the people, the atmosphere; it is like another world…like, I don’t know, another galaxy! Everything is so different and the support is very good; the Japanese fans are the best in the world. Absolutely I can say that. It was a really good experience for me.”

Kazakhstan’s Aiza Mambekova: “The Japanese fans are the best in the world.”

Chinese snowboarder Liu Jiayu followed up her ladies’ halfpipe gold at Sapporo with silver in PyeongChang. (Photo: Xinhuanet.com)
HTLY AT 2018 WINTER OLYMPICS

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Alpine snowboarder Lee Sang-ho of Korea won two gold medals at Sapporo and silver in the men’s parallel giant slalom in the Winter Olympics. (Photo: Yonhap News)
PYEONGCHANG SCRAPBOOK - BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE 2018 WINTER OLYMPICS

A giant bell offers a different kind of Olympic "ring"

Friendly police on horseback patrol at Gangneung Olympic Park.

A warm welcome to Korea House!

One of the striking exhibits outside PyeongChang Olympic Stadium.

The eye-catching Truce Wall in PyeongChang Olympic Village.
JOC meets JOC: HRH Prince Feisal Al Hussein, President of the Jordan Olympic Committee, greets his fellow IOC member Mr. Tsunekazu Takeda, President of the Japan Olympic Committee, in the grounds of the Intercontinental Hotel in PyeongChang.

Korean culture and tradition on display outside the Olympic Stadium.

Have an Ice Day...a frozen waterfall near Gangneung Olympic Park.

Meanwhile, down at the Transport Mall... just in case!
The Mongolian flag is carried into the arena, behind the Stars and Stripes of USA.

This girl is on fire: Dazzling K-Pop from KC warmed up the crowd.

The spectacular Closing Ceremony on February 25.
IOC President Thomas Bach with athlete representatives from around the world.

IOC President Thomas Bach passes the IOC flag to Beijing Mayor Chen Jining.

The Olympic spirit burns brightly at the Closing Ceremony.
2018

Gold Coast City, Australia: April 4 – 15
XXI Commonwealth Games

Bangkok, Thailand: April 15 – 20
2018 SportAccord Convention

Buenos Aires, Argentina: April 23 – 26
Youth Olympic Games 2018 Chefs de Mission Seminar

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: May 2 – 3
Olympic Solidarity/OCA Regional Forum

Phnom Penh, Cambodia: May 6 – 7
Olympic Solidarity/OCA Regional Forum

Nanjing, China: July 30 – August 5
BWF World Badminton Championships

Jakarta, Indonesia: August 18
OCA Executive Board meeting

Jakarta-Palembang, Indonesia: Aug. 18 – Sep. 2
18th Asian Games

Chengdu, China: September 28 – 30
2018 ITTF Women’s Table Tennis World Cup

Japan: September 29 – October 20
FIVB Volleyball Women’s World Championship

Buenos Aires, Argentina: October 6 – 18
Youth Olympic Games

Doha, Qatar: October 25 – November 3
48th Artistic Gymnastics World Championships

Bhubaneswar, India: Nov. 26 – Dec. 16
FIH Men’s Hockey World Cup

Tokyo, Japan: November 26 – 27
ANOC Commissions and Working Groups

Tokyo, Japan: November 27
ANOC Executive Council

Tokyo, Japan: November 28 – 29
XXIII ANOC General Assembly

Tokyo, Japan: November 28
ANOC Gala Awards 2018

Hangzhou, China: December 7 – 11
FINA Short Course (25m) Swimming World Championships

18th Asian Games Jakarta-Palembang 2018 Fun Run Series

March 2: Sri Lanka
March 4: Malaysia
March 11: Vietnam
March 15: Saudi Arabia (To Be Confirmed)
March 25: Macau, China

April 7: Bhutan
April 10: Nepal
April 15: Oman
April 22: Kazakhstan
April 25: Tajikistan

May 1: DPR Korea
May 3: Kyrgyzstan
May 5: Chinese Taipei
May 7: Cambodia
May 14: Mongolia

May 18: China
May 20: Japan (To Be Confirmed)

June 12: Timor-Leste
June 17: Thailand
June 21: Iran
June 23: Korea

July 15: India
July 18: Indonesia (To Be Confirmed)

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