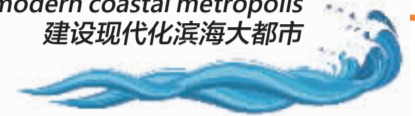


Ningbo Relay Race Kicks Off to Embrace the Upcoming Asian Games

Striving towards a modern coastal metropolis
建设现代化滨海大都市



A Tai Chi performance by the Ningbo Georgia School (GSN)



Asian Games gold medalist Wang Chengyi led a run.

It is a spring relay race. The citizens of Ningbo are eager to welcome the upcoming Asian Games Hangzhou 2022. This co-host city for the Games in Eastern China is listed as "The City of Olympic Champions", renowned for its record in nurturing five gold medalists at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The morning of April 20 marked the commencement of the relay race to herald the arrival of the Asian Games. The event - organized by the local press of Ningbo - will be routed through its 10 districts (including counties and cities), with 100 sections that span more than 100 residential communities and villages. Hundreds of foreign expats are also expected to join the Ningbo locals.

To many of these participants, the race stands for a solemn ceremony to welcome this global sporting showpiece, and on the other hand, showcases their dedication and perseverance to this coastal city.

Xu Linggang, a deliveryman, shared that his persistence in pursuing life goals can eventually make dreams come true. Guo Zhenqi—a model worker in Zhejiang Province and project manager of Ningbo Construction—stated that engaging in sports would fill him with vitality and impetus to confront obstacles, "It was particularly re-

warding to run and revisit the construction sites I worked on."

Of more than 10,000 participants, over 30% were "new Ningbonese". Alongside frontline builders and service providers, there is a group of young people who chose Ningbo as their post-graduation residence and place of employment. Their deep affection for this city stems from their four years of university life and travel experiences. Some other participants, even after having failed Ningbo-based civil servant exams, chose to stay in Ningbo and anchored new jobs thanks to receiving a text message that said, "Further explore the dynamic Ningbo, uncover more opportunities."

This relay race and the opportunities provided by this opening-up city have ignited the interest of numerous foreign expats. Seyedeh Sara Ahmadi Nishaboori—an overseas communication officer (OCO) from Iran—noted the warm reception she receives during her morning runs, which instills in her a sense of comfort. Additionally, she took advantage of this event to capture the city's scenic charm and promote the spirit of the Asian Games internationally via her vlog.

A Tai Chi performance by the Ningbo Georgia School (GSN) received a well-deserved standing ovation at the onset

of the event. Likewise, videos featuring expats engaging in sports activities in and around Ningbo generated considerable interest. More and more foreign expats have gradually integrated into this inclusive, practical, warm and vibrant city. The OCO officers of Ningbo help to promote the city's international communication, foreign executives devote themselves to the city's top-notch progress, and other expats live, work, and study in Ningbo. Together, they will continue to explore this city and accomplish their objectives in life.

Each of the 100 sections along the route will be assigned a frontrunner. These people serve as ambassadors for Ningbo and role models for our times.

Wang Chengyi, Asian Games gold medalist from Xiangshan county, led a run from the Ningbo Olympic Sports Center to the main venue of the launch ceremony with Hangzhou Asian Games mascots "Cong Cong", "Chen Chen" and "Lian Lian", marking the debut of the three in Ningbo. Wang and other ambassadors of the running group jointly proposed a vision for the city that includes vibrancy, civility, and hospitality for individuals from all over the world. The race will pass by well-known landmarks such as Ningbo Zhoushan Port, Tianyi Pavilion (aka, Tianyige Museum), and Sanjiangkou. The route features special areas and

highlights projects that have been constructed over many years, as well as communities where dedicated citizens actively participate. The route also includes fields and villages brimming with vitality due to the dedication of new farmers, and showcases the flourishing China Chic and intangible cultural heritage. The race will conclude at the Xiangshan Asian Games Sailing Center, which will host the sailing competition of this Asian Games on April 27.

This event is significant for having the longest route, lengthiest duration, and highest number of foreign participants in the history of Ningbo. In addition to the race, various activities popular among young people, including skateboarding and balance cycling, also take place at the starting point. Attendees can be entertained by friendly matches such as Tai Chi, sailing, and beach volleyball, as well as local talent shows and paper-cut art exhibitions showcasing Asian Games elements. Moreover, over 380 overseas social media accounts of Ningbo's enterprises will advocate the city from every angle, highlighting its grand themes and stunning scenery.

As the inauguration of the Games approaches, every citizen of Ningbo is working together and rushing towards the long-awaited sports event.