Friendship Games to help prepare for YOG

SOME 600 athletes from more than 20 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) will be competing in the Friendship Games this month, providing the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (SYOGOC) with a chance to validate its operation plan during the event itself. The Friendship Games are a series of national and international-level competitions for six sports – wrestling, taekwondo, boxing, judo, fencing and handball.

The events are to be held at the International Convention and Exhibition Centre - the official competition venue of the six sports during the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games. The Friendship Games, organised by the respective national sports associations, are grouped to best approximate the actual scenario during the Singapore 2010 YOG. Two new NSA (wrestling and handball) will also organise their first international competitions during the Friendship Games. The Friendship Games are just one of a series of validation exercises SYOGOC is carrying out from June 2009 to June 2010.

SYOGOC CEO Goh Kue Nguan said: “Through the Friendship Games, we will refine our operational processes and procedures as well as train our officials and volunteers who will be managing these competitions during Singapore 2010. The friendship Games will ensure that we are more operationally ready for Singapore 2010.”

Youth Olympic Village get ready to welcome athletes

All works will be completed by May, well in time for Aug event

By Lee U-Wen
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JUST seven months remain until 3,600 of the world’s top teenage athletes descend on Singapore for the inaugural Youth Olympic Games (YOG), and home for them during their two-week stay here will be the new Youth Olympic Village at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) campus.

Refurbishing works have been ongoing ever since NTU first learned in August 2008 that it was named the new host venue for the athletes’ village. The National University of Singapore’s new mega-campus in Clementi was the original site for the village, but soaring construction and fuel costs and a tight timeline forced the YOG organising committee to make the switch.

The village at NTU – located off Jalan Bahar – will occupy some 55 hectares of land, about the size of 80 football fields, said Sheryl Lim, a member of the YOG organising committee and the director of the Youth Olympic Village. All works will be complete by end-May this year, well in time before the YOG opening ceremony takes place on Aug 14.

The area has been divided into two zones – the Residential Zone and the Village Square. The former will house the athletes in numerous halls while the latter is the facility’s “heart” where most accredited personnel, including guests of national Olympic committees, will have access to, said Ms Lim.

With a quiet and serene environment, the Olympic Village will be conducive for the athletes to rest and prepare for the competition. In their free time, they can socialise and participate in the Culture and Education Programmes which will be held at the Village Square,” she said.

From now until May, the remaining tasks to be carried out at the Resi-

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Sheryl Lim, director of the Youth Olympic Village

requirements of international federations so that the athletes can conveniently train within the village or at NTU’s sports and recreation centre.

The National Institute of Education (NIE), which is located within the NTU campus, will provide some of the facilities for the athletes.

Alvin Ch’ng, divisional director of NIE’s corporate planning and development department, said that NIE’s hockey pitch, as well as its indoor and outdoor courts, are being refurbished to bring them up to the required mark.

“The hockey pitch, for example, will see better lighting, and its surface will be of a quality endorsed by the Singapore Sports Council. Indoor sport facilities are also upgraded to requirements of the Games,” said Mr Ch’ng.

Common areas and facilities of the NIE campus will also be spruced up. The canteen, for example, will have a new glass canopy and sound dampening boards to create a comfortable dining environment.

Lecture theatres which will host many village activities will have new carpeting and lights installed.

“The changing rooms have also been upgraded to provide better shower and toilet facilities for the athletes, and in the long run, our students,” said Mr Ch’ng.

Added Ms Lim: “All upgrading works are planned with the aim of leaving the upgraded facilities behind for NTU and NIE students to use after the Games.”