



Qingdao reaps gold from Olympic development

► Mayor says city benefits a lot from hosting Olympic sailing competition

By ZHANG XIAOMIN

QINGDAO: "The Olympic sailing competition is promoting the city's image to the world and bringing significant changes," said Xia Geng, mayor of the port city in Shandong province.

In fact benefits are already apparent, Xia said, noting Qingdao has developed rapidly since it won the bid to host the Olympic sailing event.

"In the past 5 years, Qingdao

witnessed one of the best and fastest-growing periods in its history. Its gross domestic product (GDP) continued to grow at an annual average rate of 16 percent and hit 378.6 billion yuan (\$54.9 billion) last year," the mayor said.

The Olympic sailing regatta has also made the port city better known to the world business community. Growing numbers of multinationals have invested in Qingdao.

Actual inflow of foreign in-

vestment to the city exceeded \$17 billion over the past five years, accounting for 60 percent of the total in the 30 years since the country's reform and opening up began in 1978. The city approved 17 large foreign-invested projects each exceeding \$100 million in value and 61 projects over \$50 million. Fifty-six projects funded by Fortune 500 companies started operation during the period.

Now 166 Fortune 500 companies have operations in Qingdao, including GE, Volkswagen, Toyota and LG, according to the Qingdao Foreign Trade and Economy Bureau.

In 2007 the local government approved 1,068 foreign-invested projects with a combined investment of \$3.83 billion. Its port handled 9.4 million units of containers, while the number of passengers through its airport reached 7.8 million.

Tourism revenues broke the 40-billion-yuan mark last year with over 30 million visitors arriving in Qingdao.

"Using the opportunity provided by hosting the Olympics, Qingdao moved big polluters out of the city and introduced service companies such as finance, logistics and education. We are building Qingdao into a city featuring modern service

industries," said the mayor.

He noted that the city of Qingdao spent about 80 billion yuan in infrastructure construction over the past five years. People in the city can now reach any part of Qingdao within an hour by car or public transport.

Its list of major projects include completion of the Olympic Sailing Center and two major highways across the city along with expansion of its train station and airport.

The Jiaoji Railway from Qingdao to Jinan was modernized. A channel tunnel and a bridge across Jiaozhou Bay connecting Qingdao and its suburbs are un-

der construction.

The income of the local residents has followed suit. Average income of urban residents increased by 15.4 percent annually and rural residents by 12.2 percent over the five-year period.

"Qingdao will continue to benefit from the Olympic sailing event for at least the next 10 years. The city will be more competitive and more open to the outside world," said Xia.

By 2010, the GDP of the city is expected to reach 490 billion yuan, when the port will handle 12 million units of containers, according to Xia.



Hot on their sail

Sailors of 470 class race in tight contention yesterday. The 470 class will begin its fifth and sixth races today.

Ju Chuanjiang

Sailing Azon sisters set sights high

By Guo Xin

QINGDAO: Spanish sisters Monica Azon and Sandra Azon have gone all out to realize their Olympic dreams in Qingdao. The sailing siblings in the Yngling class are now in 14th place after the first six races.

"The Olympic Games is the highest level of sports. It gathers the world's top athletes. All we want to do is to bring out the best in us," said Monica, current world No 6 in the Yngling class.

It is very interesting to sail together with my sister, we are good partners in competition. Not all sisters can have this special experience.

MONICA AZON

World No 6 in the Yngling class

The sisters told China Daily that their goal in the Games was to reach top five.

Qingdao is no stranger to the Azons. They participated in both the 2006 and 2007 Qingdao International Sailing Regattas.

They arrived back in Qingdao at the beginning of last month and have spent more than four hours each day training at sea.

Monica and Sandra were the 2002 and 2006 world champions in the Yngling class. They also won the



Spanish sisters Monica Azon (first right) and Sandra Azon (first left) fit their boat ahead of the Yngling races.

Ju Chuanjiang

2006 European Yngling Championship. Sandra was the women's 470-class silver medalist at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

The Azon sisters have been sailing for 25 years since childhood.

"To us, sailing is life," said Sandra.

Monica is one year older than Sandra. "We two enrolled at a sailing school together, I was just 8 at the time", said Sandra.

There are four children in the Azon family. Monica's father is an enthusiastic sports fan. He developed his children's interest and enthusiasm in sports

since their childhood. Tennis, basketball, bicycling and sailing were all great fun for the little Azons.

Monica's elder brother and sister were well-known young sailing stars in their hometown. Influenced by them, Monica and Sandra became interested in sailing and finally made it their career.

"It is very interesting to sail together with my sister, we are good partners in competition," said Monica, the skipper. "Not all sisters can have this special experience."

"We check our boat and take care of it carefully each time before and after sailing, just

like taking care of a baby," said Monica.

"Qingdao is a beautiful city, it has changed a great deal compared with the past two years, the environment is improved and the air is much cleaner," Sandra said.

"Sometimes people ask 'when you stop sailing what will you do?' and I say I don't know. I never think of a life without sailing," said Sandra.

"We may come to Qingdao again together with our family and friends," said Monica. "Of course, our next trip here will not be for competition, but for vacation," Sandra said.

Services win high praise from world

By ZHANG YING

QINGDAO: International athletes, coaches and sports officials continue to praise services at the Qingdao Olympic sailing competition four days after races began.

"Everything is fabulous in Qingdao - the venues, hotels and other facilities," said David Kellett, vice-president of the International Sailing Federation.

Qingdao's hotels are offering special services for both athletes and fans. The Haiqing Hotel serves competitors local and Western food, Muslim diets and cuisines in other regional styles.

The Shangri-La Hotel has opened its new Café Yum, a leisure restaurant designed for the Olympics, that presents Western, Japanese, Korean and Southeast Asian dishes in addition to China's local specialties.

Other hotels in the city have employed waiters and waitresses from Japan and South Korea to create a home-like environment for guests from those nations.

About 700 athletes and team officials are staying in the Qingdao Olympic Village, just a two-minute walk from the competition venue.

The village has over 400 rooms, one dining hall for 450 people and a visitor's restaurant, all open 24 hours a day.

Western food accounts for 70 percent of the total prepared. Olympic residents can choose from 80 breakfast items and

100 for lunch and dinner.

Bruno Prada, a Brazilian sailor in the Star class, celebrated his 37th birthday in the village. "It was a big surprise. Thank you very much for everything," he said with a big smile.

The village provides services ranging from security, transportation, reception, religious services, medical care and cultural exhibitions to accommodation and food, business assistance and competition information.

Exhibitions include the "Dynamic China" folk customs display, the Shandong Culture Show and a Chinese garment photo exhibition.

"I'm enjoying my stay here, where the food is good and the competition venue is very close. It is really a joy and convenient to live in the village," said Kalle Torlen a competitor in the 49er class from Sweden.

The local government has invested enormous funds to renovate roads, enlarge the airport, buy new buses and build more public parking facilities in recent years, greatly improving city transportation.

Qingdao Liuting International Airport has won wide praise from visitors after receiving three upgrades over the past five years.

The Qingdao city government also invested 240 million yuan (\$34.9 million) to replace 1,200 buses in the past two years.

The Qingdao Transportation Committee opened special bus routes for the Olympic sailing competition, with 300 buses directly serving the event.

RESULTS

Laser results after two races

1. Andrew Murdoch (New Zealand) 7
2. Diego Romero (Italy) 9
3. Julio Alsogaray (Argentina) 13
4. Gustavo Lima (Portugal) 13
5. Pavlos Kontides (Cyprus) 15
6. Paul Goodison (Britain) 17
7. Jean Baptiste Bernaz (France) 20
8. Kristian Ruth (Norway) 21
9. Rasmus Myrgren (Sweden) 23
10. Igor Lisovenko (Russia) 25

Women's RS: X results after four races

1. Yin Jian (China) 6
2. Marina Alabau (Spain) 15
3. Jessica Crisp (Australia) 17
4. Alessandra Sensini (Italy) 18
5. Bryony Shaw (Britain) 24
6. Barbara Kendall (New Zealand) 35

7. Olga Maslivets (Ukraine) 36
8. Chan Wai Kei (Hong Kong) 39
9. Yasuko Kosuge (Japan) 42
10. Tuuli Petaja (Finland) 48
11. Jannicke Stalstroem (Norway) 49
12. Irina Bontemps (Bulgaria) 49
13. Maayan Davidovich (Israel) 51
14. Nikola Girke (Canada) 52
15. Faustine Merret (France) 53

Men's RS: X results after four races

1. Shahar Zubari (Israel) 8
2. Chan King Yin (Hong Kong) 16
3. Tom Ashley (New Zealand) 19
4. Julien Bontemps (France) 23
5. Nick Dempsey (Britain) 25
6. Maksym Oberemko (Ukraine) 32
7. Wang Aichen (China) 35
8. Nikolaos Kaklamanakis (Greece) 35
9. Ricardo Santos (Brazil) 38

10. David Mier y Teran (Mexico) 44

Men's 470 results

1. Malcolm Page/Nathan Wilmot (Australia) 14 points
2. Aaron Sarmiento/Onan Barreiros (Spain) 16
3. Nicolas Charbonnier/Olivier Bausset (France) 17
4. Gabrio Zandona/Andrea Trani (Italy) 21
5. Joe Glanfield/Nick Rogers (Britain) 25
6. Miguel Nunes/Alvaro Marinho (Portugal) 25
7. Peter Burling/Carl Evans (New Zealand) 31
8. Javier Conte/Juan De La Fuente (Argentina) 32
9. Mitja Nevecny/Karlo Hmeljak (Slovenia) 33
10. Sime Fantela/Igor Marenic (Croatia) 33

Women's 470 results

1. Elise Rechichi/Tessa Parkinson (Australia) 8 points
2. Natalia Via Dufresne/Laia Luiza Tutzo (Spain) 11
3. Marcelien de Koning/Lobke Berkhout (Netherlands) 13
4. Nike Kornecki/Vered Bouskila (Israel) 22
5. Lenka Smidova/Lenka Mrzilkova (Czech Republic) 22
6. Stefanie Rothweiler/Vivien Kussatz (Germany) 24
7. Giulia Conti/Giovanna Micol (Italy) 27
8. Ingrid Petitjean/Gwendolyn Lemaître (France) 28
9. Saskia Clark/Christina Bassadone (Britain) 31
10. Klara Maucec/Vesna Dekleva (Slovenia) 31
11. Race three

Laser Radial results two races

1. Anna Tunnicliffe, United States, 9
2. Evi Van Acker, Belgium, 11
3. Sarah Steyaert, France, 112
4. Gintare Volungeviciute, Lithuania, 16
5. Sarah Blanck, Australia, 17
6. Mateja Petronijevic, Croatia, 17
7. Nathalie Brugger, Switzerland, 19
8. Cecilia Saroli Carranza, Argentina, 23
9. Penny Clark, Britain, 24
10. Susana Romero, Spain, 25

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