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Medal Prospects for RP

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Palembang— Sans entries to three unfamiliar sports—vovinam, kempo and roller skating—the Philippines will not have access to 42 gold medals out of the total 545 at stake in the 26th Southeast Asian Games held in this city, Jakarta and West Java.

The Philippines has the fifth largest delegation at 747, athletes and officials included, behind Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia and must strike heavily for the gold in athletics, swimming, wushu, taekwondo, pencak silat, gymnastics, karate, judo, wrestling, canoeing and boxing to improve its standing in the field of 11 nations.

Athletics alone offers 46 gold medals, swimming 38, taekwondo 21, pencak silat 18, gymnastics and karate 17, and there are 16 for the taking in the sophomore event of fin swimming. Judo has 16 divisions for as many gold medals, canoeing has 15, boxing 14, the same number staked in sailing and in weightlifting, where the Philippines has only four entries.

There are also sports that offer a sizeable number of gold medals such as archery, new event sport climbing, billiards and bowling—10 each—and water ski 11 along with rowing.

“The equal distribution of power in various disciplines will make it difficult for one nation to dominate so the size of the delegation will be a critical factor. For example, countries with the maximum number of entries in a particular event will have better chances. In most sports, we only have one entry,” observed Deputy Chef De Mission (DCDM) Romeo Magat, who is in charge of the Palembang side.

Julian Camacho, the DCDM assigned in Jakarta and West Java is counting on his wushu crew that scored major victories in the world championships particularly 52 kgs. gold medallist Dember Arcita and silver medal winner Marianne Mariano in the 54 kgs division. Also in that line up are Mark Ediva, Edward Folayang, Rhea Mae Rifani and Benjie Rivera, all eyeing for the gold.

“We also have good chances in team sports but the disadvantage of that is we can only win one gold medal in team sports where we have strength. We have to score heavily on the individual events to raise our output and hopefully our overall standing,” Camacho concluded.

The formal opening of the Games is on November 11 in this quiet city of 1.6 million which will feature the United and Rising song that was composed by no less than the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who will also formally declare the Games open until the 22nd of November.

Filipina entertainer KC Concepcion will take part in the three-hour long program of dance and song when she gives a rendition of “Together We Will Shine” along with Indonesia’s Agnes Monica and Malaysian Jacklyn Victor.