

Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships to Make Historic Debut in Ulju, South Korea

Ulju, South Korea - October 23, 2024 - The inaugural Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships will take place in Ulju, South Korea from October 23 to 27, 2024. This groundbreaking event will bring together elite athletes from 23 countries or regions as they compete with pride in a gathering of world class trail running.

The Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships mark a significant milestone as the first championship of its kind to be held in Asia Pacific. Embraced by the best trail athletes in the region, this event represents a giant leap forward for the sport in Asia Pacific. It will showcase the talent and dedication of the region's finest trail runners.

Whilst teams and start lists are still being finalised, teams already registered represent: Australia; Brunei; Cambodia; China; Chinese Taipei; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea; Macao, China; Malaysia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; the Philippines; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Vietnam.

The largest representation will be from Hong Kong with over 30 athletes, showing that there is huge appetite among Hong Kong runners to compete on the global stage. The Philippines, with continued momentum from their win at the Southeast Asian Trail Running Cup in June, will field over 20 athletes. Japan and Australia, two trail running powerhouses, each expect to have 20 runners competing. With home-field advantage, Korea will be represented by a team of 28 runners, whilst Vietnam, an up-and-coming trail running hot-spot, has 23. India is fielding 18 athletes – is this the awakening of trail running's sleeping giant?

Athletes will compete in both individual and team categories, with a prestigious cup awarded to the team demonstrating the best overall performance. The 3 event categories are 80 km (long trail), 40 km (short trail) and a 15 km trail race for athletes under the age of 23. Participation is reserved for the top trail runners from each country or region, selected based on their International Trail Running Association ranking (known as the "ITRA performance index" or "ITRA PI"), with only the top 30 athletes from each country or region qualifying for the competition.



Yuri Yoshizumi, Japan's highest ranked female trail runner with an ITRA PI of 772, is excited about competing at the APTRC and has her sights set high: "I am proud to represent Japan at the Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships, which ITRA is hosting for the first time. My focus has been on long-distance races for several years. While I had a disappointing performance at the 2023 World Championships, this year, I will give it my all, aiming for the gold medal." Yoshizumi-san is optimistic about trail running in the region, the impact of the APTRC 2024 and the scope for inspiring the next generation: "There is no doubt in my mind that trail running in APAC has a bright future ahead. It is fantastic that the championships are being held in Ulju, South Korea – I intend to make the most of the opportunity to be a role model for young athletes."



John "Stingray" Onifa, the Philippines' fastest ever trail runner (ITRA PI 861), shares Yoshizumi-san's enthusiasm for competing internationally as a team: "I'm excited to participate in the Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships. It is a chance to showcase the strength and talent of the Philippines on the international stage alongside my teammates." Onifa also believes in the impact this opportunity will have on both the runners and the discipline: "Just like in the last Southeast Asian Trail Running Cup, meeting competitors helps us become better athletes—we compete on the course and build friendships off it. This time, it's even bigger. Sports uplift the spirit of our nation, and our representation and success in events like this serve as an inspiration for everyone back home. It also promotes the sport and helps it grow." Janet Ng, ITRA's President, endorsed this view: "Stingray just nailed it. The APTRC is about top level competition, camaraderie and friendship and taking the wonderful sport of trail running to the next level together".

Even if athletes do not qualify for the championships, they can still participate in the public race, Ultra Trail Nine Peaks, which will run concurrently with the main event. This offers an exciting opportunity for all trail running enthusiasts to be part of this momentous occasion.

"We are thrilled to host the Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships in Ulju, South Korea, and to welcome elite athletes from across the region to showcase their skills and passion for trail running," said Ms Jey Jang, Race Director of the APTRC. "This championship represents a unique opportunity to celebrate the amazing talent and dedication of trail runners in Asia Pacific and to elevate the sport to new heights."

Stay tuned for updates and highlights from the Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships as athletes from around the region converge on Ulju to make their mark on trail running history.

About APTRC – The Asia Pacific Trail Running Championships

The inaugural edition of the Asia Pacific Trail Running Championship (APTRC) will be held in the breathtaking landscapes of Ulju-gun, Ulsan City, South Korea, from 23-27 October, 2024. The APTRC will showcase APAC's top trail runners competing in individual and country/region categories covering distances of 40 km and 80 km.

There will also be a U23 category with a distance of 15 km. The APTRC will form part of the Ulju Trail Festa where runners (adults, kids and even pets!) can participate in the public race, Ultra Trail Nine Peaks, offering distances from 10km to 124 km and attracting over 3,000 participants.

About ITRA – the International Trail Running Association

Founded in 2013, ITRA (the International Trail Running Association) represents around 150,000 athletes and 3,500 event organizer members in over 160 countries. ITRA is the leading reference organization for trail running globally, providing services to individual trail runners and trail running organizations, as well as international leadership for the sport. For more information about ITRA please visit our website www.itra.run.

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