

press release

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Japan's Koichiro Fukuoka and North Korea's Kim Kum Ok Win Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008

*Asians edge GROE stars as Japanese runner wins on debut in Hong Kong and
North Korean women take first and second in Marathon*

[Hong Kong, February 17, 2008]: The 12th annual Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon was successfully held with a new course configuration today. Japanese runner Koichiro Fukuoka won both the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon - Men's and the 11th Asian Marathon Championship titles on his debut appearance in the Hong Kong Marathon with a time of 2:16.50.

The Women's Marathon was won by North Korean Kim Kum Ok in a photo finish with her compatriot Jong Yong Ok as the pair crossed the finish line holding hands on a joint-equal time of 2:36.43. The judges at the finish line gave the nod to Kim Kum Ok after review. The Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon, Half Marathon and 10km Challenge attracted over 50,000 registered runners.

Speaking after the Marathon, a tired but pleased Men's Marathon winner Koichiro Fukuoka commented on the results saying, "I was a bit surprised to beat the many strong runners from Kenya today. It is my 6th marathon to date and my first time to run here in Hong Kong, so I am delighted to have won."

The 29-year-old finished ahead of Kenyan Cyprian Kiogara Mwobi (2:18:03) and Zimbabwean Phillip Bandawe(2:18:52) in the Standard Chartered Men's Marathon and ahead of Bat-Ochir Ser-Od of Mongolia (2:20:18) and Pisarev Valerii of Kyrgyzstan (2:21:45) in the 11th Asian Marathon Championships.

A unique double win was also seen today by North Korean runners Kim Kum Ok and Jong Yong Ok, both of whom crossed the finish line holding hands with equal times of 2:36:43. The finish judges gave the victory to Kim Kum Ok, who was adjudged to have crossed the line first.



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Both of the North Korean runners have made North Korea's team for the Marathon at the Beijing 2008 Olympics and both aim to further improve and strive for a medal finish in Beijing this summer.

"The conditions were a bit warmer than I am used to and it was very humid at times but I am very pleased with my performance," said Kim. "My win here today is excellent preparation for the Beijing Olympics and I will try very hard to finish with a medal at the Games, but the competition will be very difficult and no one knows who can win. But I will do my very best," said Kim.

By virtue of their one-two performance today, the North Koreans swept both the Women's Marathon winner and first-runner up spots and the 11th Asian Marathon Championship winner and first-runner up spots. Hikichi Mika of Japan finished in third place in both the Standard Chartered Women's Marathon and the Asian Marathon Championships with a time of 2:36:50.

The Standard Chartered Greatest Race on Earth (GROE) Marathon Series was won by Team Kenya B in the Men's category after Cyprian Kiogara Mwobi became the first GROE finisher in the Men's Marathon with a time of 2:18:03. He was followed by Phillip Bandawe of Zimbabwe with a time of 2:18:21 and Paul Marmo Sumaye of Tanzania in a time of 2:19:52.

In the Women's GROE Anne Jepkemboi Kosgei finished in first place amongst GROE competitors with a time of 2:41:09, followed by Fabiola William John of Tanzania with a time of 2:43:36 and Thailand's Sunisa Sailomyen in 2:48:48.

The Standard Chartered Greatest Race on Earth takes the cumulative team times across four Standard Chartered sponsored Marathons in Mumbai, India; Nairobi, Kenya; Singapore and Hong Kong.

Mr Benjamin Hung, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited commented on today's successful race saying, "Standard Chartered is very pleased to be involved with the Hong Kong Marathon for a 12th year in 2008 and judging by the comments from many of the runners this was the best year yet. The comments from many of the 10km runners on the new 10km Challenge route for the Standard Chartered Marathon have been overwhelmingly positive. Finishing at Victoria Park has also helped to increase the atmosphere. Within 12 years we have grown the event to 50,000 runners and our goal now is to become one of the world's top marathons, on par with those in London or Boston."

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Standard Chartered Bank's "Seeing Is Believing" Global Goodwill Ambassador, visually impaired runner Henry Wainyoke, who finished in 9th place in today's Half Marathon, also had many favourable comments on the race saying, "This year was much better in terms of conditions on the course. Moving the 10km race to a separate start has really reduced the crowding on the course helping me to get a better time today. I feel very privileged to be invited back to run here. Hong Kong is like my second home because of the huge amount of support I receive from the crowds and fellow runners."

In other race categories, the Men's Half Marathon saw another photo finish with Hong Kong's Chan Ka Ho and Japan's Motoharu Fukunaga both finishing with equal official times of 1:12:01. Chan was adjudged to be the first to cross the line and took home top honours in today's Half Marathon, with Fukunaga trailing and Hong Kong's Gi Ka Man in third place with a time of 1:12:39. Hong Kong swept the top three spots in the Women's Half Marathon as Toh So Liang won the Half Marathon and Masters 2 categories with a time of 1:27:39 while Sarah Cheung Hoi Wah finished in second with a time of 1:28:51, followed by Rachel Sproston in third with a time of 1:29:16.

The Men's 10km Challenge race was won by Hong Kong's Tse Hok Man in 0:33:42 ahead of China's Kuok Chi Wai in 0:33:47 and Hong Kong's Chan Chan Kit in 0:34:07. Hong Kong took the 10km Challenge double with Leung Ying Suet winning the Women's 10km challenge in 0:38:01, ahead of the United Kingdom's Charlotte Cutler in 0:38:32 and Yiu Kit Ching also from Hong Kong who came in third place with a time of 0:39:01.

About the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008

The Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 will be held on Sunday, 17 February 2008. The Marathon is Hong Kong's largest participatory sporting competition and has set another participation record this year with nearly 50,000 registered runners.

The 10km Challenge start will be at 5:15am for runners who expect to finish within 1:10:00 of starting. The 10km Run 1, Run 2 and Run 3 will start at 5:40 am, 6:10 am and 6:40 am respectively. Half Marathon start will be at 7:00am while Full Marathon will begin at 7:45am.

Standard Chartered Hong Kong is in its 12th years of title sponsorship to the Hong Kong Marathon. Additional sponsors and supporting parties include: New Balance Athletic shoes (Hong Kong) Limited, Watsons Water, Citizen Watches (HK) Limited, Crown Motors Ltd., iDS (Hong Kong) Ltd., LLA Consultancy Ltd., Hong Kong Tourism Board, Information Services Department, Western Harbour Tunnel Co. Ltd. and Transport Infrastructure Management Ltd..

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