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2024 XTEP Jinjiang Marathon Held 20,000 Runners from 13 Countries Race on "the Most Beautiful Course"

At 7:30 a.m. on December 1, the 2024 Xtep Jinjiang Marathon kicked off, attracting over 20,000 runners from 13 countries, including China, Austria, South Korea, Kenya, Malaysia, the United States, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Mongolia. Participants demonstrated their energy and enthusiasm as they enjoyed the scenic beauty and rich Minnan cultural heritage along Fujian Jinjiang's most picturesque marathon course.

This year's Jinjiang Marathon featured three categories: the full marathon (42.195km), half marathon (21.0975km), and Fun Run (8.8km). The event included improvements in race organization, course design, prize structure, and logistical support to enhance the experience for all participants.

The Jinjiang Marathon is more than just a sporting event; it is a celebration of urban culture, sports, and tourism. This year's main course along Century Avenue connected the city center with historic towns, extending to Anping Bridge — recognized as China's longest surviving sea-crossing stone bridge — and linking two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Anping Bridge and Cao'an Temple, which houses the statue of Mani.

On the course, runners were cheered on by volunteers dressed in Nanyang costumes holding motivational signs. Alongside the track, flash mobs performed traditional arts such as Suoluolian, Wuzuquan, Gaojia Opera, and Nanyin music, while young bands brought a fusion of traditional and modern performances to life.

The "Running Teams of Overseas Chinese Businessmen", which shone on the Jinjiang Marathon course in 2023 and received widespread recognition and praise from the Chinese Athletic Association and various sectors of society, expanded further this year. The event saw participation from 16 Jinjiang associations and chambers of commerce, with teams representing countries such as the United States, Singapore, and Thailand, as well as domestic regions like Hong Kong, Macao, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Shanghai, and Jiangsu.

Since its inception in 2016, the Jinjiang Marathon has steadily grown in scale and influence, establishing itself as a key platform for integrating sports, culture, and tourism while presenting a vibrant image of the city. Upgraded to a World Athletics Label Road Race this year, the event set a record for registrations and attracted numerous elite athletes from home and abroad.

The event was certified by the Chinese Athletic Association, guided by the Fujian Provincial Athletic Association, hosted by the Jinjiang Municipal Government, and organized by the Jinjiang Bureau of Culture, Sports and Tourism, along with Jinjiang Economy News.



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Malaysian Running Club Hailed Jinjiang Marathon

Among all the 20,000 participants, the Forward Running Club from Malaysia has attracted a lot of attention. While enjoying the glamorous scenery and culture of Maritime Silk Road, Malaysian runners also refreshed their personal best (PB) along "the most beautiful course" of Jinjiang Marathon.

"It has been my second time to be here for Jinjiang Marathon and it is awesome!" said Zheng Yichuan from the Forward Running Club. He is also one of the major advocates of the club's participation. "Thanks to the route optimization, I've improved my record by 8 minutes this year and ran into 2 hours and 44 minutes in full marathon," he said.

"It has been the first time for most of our members to participate in a Marathon race away from Malaysia. It is such luck that Jinjiang Marathon could be their first stop", cheered Lin Zihui (President of the Forward Athletics Association, Penang, Malaysia), right after his completion of the full Marathon. He came not only along with the excellent runners of the club, but also his own family. "It is also the first marathon race for my wife. She has made it, her first half marathon."

Consisting of 20 Malaysian runners, the Forward Running Club is the first all-foreigner running club in Jinjiang Marathon. Members of the club are all excellent runners with full marathon PB within 3 hours. Some of them even have it less than 2 hours and 40 minutes. This time, they have participated in full marathon and half marathon.

"We are so glad that all of our members sailed through their races. Some of them refreshed their PB and set a new personal record while the best one made it 2 hours and 37 minutes in full marathon. With its growing influence, Jinjiang Marathon has been approved by more and more marathon lovers. We've had great experience here and we are looking forward to having more Malaysian runners join us next year," said Lin Zihui.

Flash Mobs Surprise and Delight Runners at Jinjiang Marathon

Runners finishing the Jinjiang Marathon Fun Run were treated to a surprise flash mob. Around 9 a.m., children from the Qianjin Children's Choir and Xiaogudong Music Studio gathered at Cao'an Park Square. Waving Chinese flags, they launched into a spirited rendition of "Singing for the Motherland", captivating onlookers with an exhilarating flash mob.

This year's Jinjiang Marathon featured a special "surprise" prepared by the organizing committee for the runners. At the start and finish lines of the half and full marathons, as well as the finish line of the Fun Run, participants were treated not only to spectacular stage performances but also to thrilling flash mobs that could pop up at any moment.

As the choir concluded, young mar-

tial artists from the Longhao Martial Arts Club took the stage. Their powerful movements, performed to dynamic music, drew enthusiastic cheers from the onlookers. "I'd just finished the run when I heard this inspiring music," said runner Hong Mingyue, giving a thumbs-up while filming the show. "The kids' performance was so uplifting!"

At the start and finish lines located at the Jinjiang Sports Center, the flash mob performances were equally spectacular. After crossing the finish line, half and full marathon runners enjoyed performances of Nanyin music and Wuzuquan martial arts.

"Jin Yi Gu Yan", the highlight of this year's performances, was a modern reimagining of Nanyin music presented with dedication by the Jinjiang Nanyin

Art Troupe and Jinjiang Economy News. On-site, the Jinjiang Nanyin Art Troupe delivered a performance that brilliantly blended vocals, drama, and pop music with the elegant sounds of traditional instruments such as the flute, xiao, and pipa, creating a refreshingly innovative take on Nanyin. This novel approach to Nanyin captivated runners and spectators alike, deeply immersing them in the profound heritage of traditional culture while showcasing the boundless charm of modern creativity.

"We often talk about preserving tradition while innovating, and this performance perfectly embodies that," said half-marathon runner Shi Zipeng. "It's a sophisticated and fresh way to introduce young people to Nanyin and Jinjiang's traditional culture."

