

Revelation across Great Wall

TOKYO, Nov. 28: Chinese swimmer Lu Bin, who won four golds and two silvers at last month's Asian Games, was one of 11 Chinese athletes who tested positive for drugs at the games, the Kyodo news agency said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Kyodo, quoting sources at the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), said eight of the athletes who tested positive were swimmers.

Lu set a world record for the 200 metres individual medley at the Games on October 7. She also won gold in the 50 metres freestyle, two relay golds and finished runner-up in the 100 metres freestyle and 100 backstroke.

At the Rome World Championships in September, Lu won the 200 individual medley title plus two relay golds and finished runner-up in the 100 metres and 200 metres freestyle.

Kyodo said world 400 metres freestyle champion Yang Aihua, who had already been banned for two years by the International Swimming Federation (FINA), was also one of the eight.

It said the three other positive tests involved a track and field athlete, a cyclist and canoeist.

Earlier Mutaleh Ahmad, director-general of the Kuwait-based OCA, said he had been informed that 11 Chinese had tested positive but declined to identify the athletes or say which events they had competed in.

Ahmad said final tests would be carried out to confirm the findings.

"We expect a final and official report on this situation to reach us by the end of tomorrow (Tuesday) and only then can the OCA make an official statement on this matter," he said.

An official of the information section to the national sports commission in Beijing said: "We have not received any notification from the Olympic Committee of Asia, so we cannot make any comment."

In Lausanne, FINA said it had no information on any positive tests.

"We have not received any information from the organizers of the Asian Games," FINA

director Cornel Marculescu said. "It is up to them to take a decision first and then to inform us, but we have no information yet."

Meanwhile, AP reports: The performance of China's athletes at last month's Asian Games often seemed too good to be true. Reports Monday quoting Games officials said some of them probably were.

According to several Japanese media reports, organizing commission officials said banned substances have been detected in the urine samples of 11 Chinese athletes who participated at the Games.

The officials, who were not named, reportedly said the samples indicated the athletes had abnormally high levels of testosterone or other performance-enhancing substances in their systems.

The names of the athletes were not released pending official confirmation, but the reports said six — two women and four men — competed in swimming. The others were in track and field, rowing and other events.

The Chinese women's swimming team won all 15 titles at the Games, which were held in Hiroshima, and 137 of the total 337 events held.

Asian Games organizers contacted by the Associated Press confirmed the head of their medical commission was in Tokyo in connection with the tests, but refused to comment further.

A spokesperson for the lab where the tests were conducted, Mitsubishi Chemical

JCL, refused to comment. The doctor who supervised the tests could not be immediately reached.

The reports come just days after FINA, the international swimming federation, banned world champion swimmer Yang Aihua from competing for the next two years because she tested positive for testosterone in surprise tests just prior to the Asian Games.

Yang won the 400-metre freestyle at the World Championships in September, part of a Chinese onslaught that stunned swimming fans. Chinese women won no less than 12 of 16 golds at stake, and set five world records in the process.

Though they did not name China, more than a dozen coaches at the championships lodged a formal complaint over doping in the sport and requested stricter tests. That led to the surprise testing held just days before the Asian Games began Oct. 2.

FINA officials said the results of those tests indicated possible drug use among several other Chinese women swimmers, but were inconclusive.

Though Chinese sports officials insist they oppose drug use among athletes and publicly threaten to deal harshly with offenders, Yang's case is by no means the first.

Five Chinese swimmers have failed doping tests over the past two years — equaling the total number of athletes from other countries that have tested positive in FINA tests over the past 22 years.

Yang is at least the 34th Chinese athlete to flunk a doping test since 1987. Chinese officials acknowledge 24 of their athletes tested positive last year alone.

Her homecoming has been a huge event in Romania with crowds calling "Nadia, Nadia, Nadia" at every stop.

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