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Afghan girls inspired to maintain exercise

By Abdul Haleem

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KABUL - "By attending the London Olympics I have given the message to all the Afghan girls that they are talented, they can do sport, they can attend international competitions and above all they can earn honor to their country," Tahmina Kohistani told Xinhua on Tuesday.



The only Afghan girl, Kohistani, 23, who competed in running at London Olympics but failed to win medal, was joyful for representing Afghan women there in the international contests.

"Although I could not earn medal in the contest, I was able to represent Afghan women with talent and so, I am proud to be the first Afghan girl attending Olympic Games," said the ambitious Kohistani after returning home.

In the conservative Afghanistan it was unbelievable 11 years ago when Taliban regime was in power.

The fundamentalist regime which collapsed in late 2001 by the U.S.-led military campaign had banned schools for girls and confined women to their houses. The outfit has also imposed series of restrictions on men athletes including sporting long beard and wearing long trousers during playing.

In the national sport stadium -- Ghazi Stadium, Kabul where the athletes in the post-Taliban Afghanistan exercise daily to improve their ability, Taliban militants during their six-year reign often awarded punishment including execution and chopping hands and feet to alleged criminals there each Friday which is the Muslim Weekly holiday.

A six-member Afghan team which includes Rohullah Nikpa and Nisar Ahmad Bahawi in taekwondo, Masoud Azizi and Tahmina Kohistani the only female in running, Aimal Faisal and Ajmal Faizi Zada in boxing and judo represented Afghanistan in the London 2012 Olympic Games.

In the men's 68kg category, the Afghan taekwondo player, Nikpa after beating his rivals Michal Loniewski from Poland 12-5, Martin Stamper from Britain 5-3, David Boui of Central African Republic 14-2 and losing to Iranian player Mohammad Bagheri Motamed had earned Bronze medal, the second of its kind earned by Afghanistan, both by Nikpa, 25.

However, the remaining five had lost in the London 2012 international tournaments.

The team returned home Tuesday morning and the exciting Afghans awarded red-carpet welcome to Olympic medalist Rohullah Nikpa and his entourage as thousands of people including government officials and lawmakers waiting in long queue at Kabul International Airport to receive the Olympic hero and associates.

A long convoy of motorcades and horse riders were slowly moving on the road leading to the airport to welcome the athletes.

"I would try my best to win gold medal in the next Olympic Games," Nikpa told Xinhua amid hundreds of his admirers.

The people waiting to receive the athletes were proud of the earning a medal -- the bronze in the London Games.

"It is a matter of pride for Afghans that their country has secured position among the medal winning nations," a sport fan and athlete Ahmad Adeeb Wali, 21 told Xinhua at Ghazi Stadium;

while eagerly waiting among thousands of people to receive the six athletes which includes Ms. Tahmina Kohistani, the ambitious girl inspiring Afghan females to support sport in Afghanistan.