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Golden chance for recruits

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NATIONAL champion Wong Ewee Mun and P. Kantharoopan, who have just been drafted into the national squad will spearhead Malaysia's challenge in the first leg of the Asian Satellite championships in Johor Baru on March 12-16.

The two former national players, who were dropped from the squad last year, made an impact at the recent trials and will be aiming to prove themselves in their first competition since joining national training last week under chief coach Morten Frost.

The Asian Satellite is an inaugural championships and the BA of Malaysia (BAM) have entered most of the backup players for the competition which clashes with the All-England championships.

Asian Badminton Confederation (ABC) secretary Datuk Punch Gunalan said the dates were set deliberately to clash with major events so that lesser known players will have an alternative competition to compete in.

Said Gunalan: "The top shuttlers will be playing in the All-England championships and the second stringers will have no chance playing in a major event.

"They will have to go through the qualifying rounds and may not even make the main draw. It would be better for them to compete in our Satellite tournaments where they will be in the main draw and will also be able to do quite well.

"They will have better exposure here compared to a major event where they will probably play in one or two matches only."

In the men's doubles, our best bet is the national pair of Cheah Soon Thoe and Chong Kim Wai while World Junior champions Jeremy Gan and Chang Chong Ming will also be competing.

National Uber Cup player Ishwary Boopathy will spearhead the women's singles while Lim Pek Siah and Chor Hooi Yee are tops in the doubles.

Frost is expected to be at the championships to observe his charges in action for the first time since the national and backup teams were announced.

MALAYSIAN entries - Men's singles: Wong Ewee Mun, P. Kantharoopan, Ramesh Nathan, James Chua, Foo Yoon Keang, Yap Yong Jyen, Lee Tsuen Seng, Mahathir Mustafa, Yeoh Kay Bin, Alan Tai, Siew Yian Wai, Sairul Ayob, Chang Chong Ming, Jeremy Gan, Foo Yeow Chyuan, Lee Kien Fah, Mahkhazim Mohamad, Fong Soo Wei, Lee Kim Fai.

Doubles: Cheah Soon Thoe-Chong Kim Wai, Pang Cheh Chang-Khoo Boo Hock, Chang Chong Ming-Jeremy Gan, Lim Thean Thoe-Khoo Kok Kheng, Yap Wee Meng-Tan Soo Sen, James Chua-Yeoh Kay Bin, Makhazim Mohd-Lee Kien Fah, Foo Yeow Chyuan-Lee Kim Fai.

WOMEN'S singles: Lee Yin Yin, Ng Mee Fen, Ishwary Boopathy, Lee Winnie, Law Pei Pei, K. Sugita.

Doubles: Lim Pek Siah-Chor Hooi Yee, Joanne Quay-Norashikin Amin, Ang Li Peng-Chong Nga Fan, Wong Sze Mei-Norfhara Idayu.

Mixed doubles: Pang Cheh Chang-Lim Pek Siah, Rosman Razak-Joanne Quay, Chew Chun Eng-Norashikin Amin, Lee Chee Leong-Ang Li Peng, Chang Chong Ming-Norfhara Idayu.

(END)