



PRESS RELEASE

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BWF HOLDS VIRTUAL PRESS CONFERENCE ON RESUMPTION OF CIRCUIT

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) today held a virtual press conference on confirmation of the Asian leg of the badminton tournament calendar. BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer, BWF Deputy President Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul and BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund answered a range of questions during BWF's first such virtual interaction with world media.

BWF's enthusiasm in resuming international badminton events once again despite challenging circumstances, and with due considerations for the health and safety of all those involved, was emphasised during the virtual press conference today.

Questions ranged from BWF's decision to conduct the Asian leg of the 2020 season in January 2021, comparisons with other sports that have restarted tournaments, and safety protocols in place in Thailand.

BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer expressed his sympathy for players under the current difficult circumstances, while reiterating BWF's commitment to get tournaments started as early as possible.

"We are here for the players and we're trying our best to get tournaments up and running," Høyer said.

Asked why BWF had chosen to conduct the Asian leg in January 2021 and not in November 2020, Lund charted the complexity of the process.

"We had planned the European leg which included the TOTAL BWF Thomas and Uber Cup Finals and two Denmark Opens in October. At the same time we announced we would plan an Asian leg. Setting up that level of events is a complex and big exercise. Simply due to time constraints, we are not able to conduct it before January, which was found to be the best time to get the logistical arrangements in place."

While a few other sports had restarted their circuits, Lund said badminton faced challenges of a vastly different scale.

"The challenges are not as big if you don't have to cross so many national borders. In our normal tournament structure, we have 300 to 400 players coming from 40 to 60 countries. The big challenge here is that we need them getting out of their countries, and then getting in to the host countries, with quarantine restrictions and so on, which are being dealt differently in different places. That creates a complexity in getting that many people together in one location. That's what we are trying to bridge by creating this cluster in Thailand, where we can play a number of tournaments in the same location."

Lund noted that a lot of effort had gone into planning the resumption of the circuit, with the DANISA Denmark Open (13-18 October 2020) marking badminton's long-awaited return.

Lund added that it was possible that the cluster model would be adopted for more tournaments if found suitable.

"We are looking into whether we can replicate that into further clusters in 2021. That's part of the exercise we're going through at the moment. This could be a blueprint on how we can conduct tournaments in an Asian leg, and how we can move that on in further cluster tournaments. But there are financial complexities that we are working to get through."

Detailing the safety measures that would be in place for the Asian leg, Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul, also the President of the Badminton Association of Thailand (BAT), said all efforts were being taken to ensure the safety of participants.

"The safety and health of the Thai people and of the participants is our top priority. We have consulted with numerous Thai authorities to decide the most efficient COVID-19 safety measures. We came up with the bubble protocols which will be implemented during that period," said Leeswadtrakul.

Leeswadtrakul was confident of Thailand delivering high-quality events during the Asian leg, and invited journalists to attend.

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For a copy of the recording, please contact BWF below.

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ABOUT BWF

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) is the international governing body of the sport of badminton, recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). It was originally the International Badminton Federation (IBF) which was founded on 5 July, 1934, before being rechristened the Badminton World Federation in 2006.

The purpose and objectives of BWF include regulating, promoting, developing and popularising the sport of badminton throughout the world and organising, conducting and presenting international events at the highest level.

The BWF's vision is to make badminton a leading global sport accessible to all – giving every child a chance to play for life. Its mission is to lead and inspire all stakeholders; to deliver entertainment through exciting events to drive fan experience; and to create innovative, impactful and sustainable development initiatives.

BWF has its headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with 194 Member Associations worldwide.

Poul-Erik Høyer is the BWF President and Thomas Lund is the BWF Secretary General.

Websites: www.bwfbadminton.com and www.bwfcorporate.com

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