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OLYMPIC SPECIAL

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HEAT IS ON LONDON

Olympic organizers seek to avoid last-minute hitches as they cross their fingers for the sun to shine, report **Zhang Haizhou** and **Cecily Liu** from London.



A close-up view of one of the Olympic relay torches in a display case inside the Olympic Village where athletes will live for the duration of the London 2012 Games.

LEON NEAL / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.

So said the English writer and critic Samuel Johnson in 1777. For many people, that sentence neatly encapsulates the allure of Britain's capital city.

Now, 235 years later, the time is rapidly approaching

for London to display its attractions to the world once again.

With only three days until the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games, people are expecting more than just a magnificent sporting event from the city, which has hosted the Games twice before, in 1908 and 1948.

Will the rain reign?

What are people most looking forward to? Well, it's definitely not the British weather.

The summer has been a washout so far, with sporting events disrupted the length and breadth of the country.

"Maybe it is time to call upon the sun god Ra, or Phoebus Apollo, or Sol Victrix, or whatever name he now goes by, and lift our hands in chanting entreaty. Come on, O thou fiery spirit that animates the world. Come on out from wherever you are hiding. Shine the light of your countenance upon us, you miserable blighter. Give us poor Britons some kind of a summer — before the entire country dissolves like a sugar cube and sinks into the sea," wrote London Mayor Boris Johnson in the Daily Telegraph newspaper last week.

If the records over the past 30 years are anything to go by, temperatures in July, August and September typically rise to the low 20s Celsius and rain is expected on 10 days of each month, with a typical August seeing almost 50 millimeters over the course of the month.

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SEE "CHILD" PAGE 2



3 DAYS TO GO

A special treat for our readers

The China Daily Olympic Special has burst out of the starting blocks. Every day except Sunday, from July 24 until Aug 13, the publication will keep readers in the Greater London area up to date with all that is happening at the XXX Olympiad.

From the pool to the track — and all the arenas in between — the special will keep you up to date inside and outside the competitions — with a special focus on Team China, which is anticipating a top-two finish after hosting the extravaganza in 2008 and topping the gold-medal table.

The special will provide an in-depth look at what is going on in the host city and its unique culture and history. A special team of columnists will also give their perspectives about the world's greatest sporting show.



A general view of the Tower Bridge decorated with the Olympic ring symbol, in central London.

MIGUEL MEDINA / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Second child is a growing, but tough option

Increasing number of eligible parents want another baby

By SHAN JUAN
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Beijing mother Han Xue had a second child last year, 10 years after her first. But despite eligibility, the process was far from easy and entailed a bureaucratic paper chase.

Han, 31, felt that two children would keep each other company and provide better support to her and her husband in old age.

"As soon as my first child turned four, we filed an application for a permit to have a second child to the government office that oversees the street where I was born," Han said.

Han and her husband were both single children and allowed, under the family planning policies introduced in the 1970s, to have a second child.

An increasing number of parents in

this category are opting to do so.

Nanjing offers a prime example. Applications filed in the capital of Jiangsu province surged to 600 last year from 85 in 2007, family planning authorities said.

Meanwhile, the number of urban couples eligible to have two children has also increased as the single-child generation comes of marriageable age.

About 10,000 couples are eligible in Nanjing annually, and authorities estimate that by 2015 up to 17 percent of couples in the city will be

entitled to have two children.

Already, about 15 percent of women in Nanjing who booked maternity beds for the second half of 2012 were expecting their second baby.

Since 1985, couples in the province are allowed a second child if both parents were single children.

In the province of Jiangxi, the story is much the same

In Jiujiang, one of the province's major cities, the family planning department in Xunyang district received 15 second-baby applications from March to June.

All were from couples who were themselves single children and they accounted for 31 percent of applications during this period.

"More and more couples in the category wanted a second child over the past three years in the district," Yu Liye, an official with the department, said.

However, couples, including Han, complained the application process was complicated and bureaucratic.