

India vows no more monkey business at badminton worlds

NEW DELHI • Monkeys and bird droppings marred the India Open badminton tournament earlier this year, but officials promised Wednesday those problems would not be repeated at the world championships this month.

The showpiece event returns to India after 17 years at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium from Aug. 17-23.

The venue faced criticism for its poor hygiene after play was disrupted on several days in January, including during a semifinal when debris from a bird's nest fell on the court.

Bird droppings were also seen on courts, while TV pictures showed a monkey making its way into the stands.

"I am 100 per cent sure that this time the pigeon-related

or any kind of bird and animal-related problems will not occur during the world championship," Badminton Association of India secretary Sanjay Mishra told AFP. "All the problems that were encountered during the India Open have been solved, and this edition will prove to be one of the best world championships."

The draws for the 30th

edition of the world championships were announced in the national capital this week, with Badminton World Federation officials confident of a good tournament.

"A lot of work has gone into the venue, from waterproofing to applying gel on the roofing — to stop pigeons perching on those beams," BWF events director of tourna-

ment operations Selvaamresh Supramaniam told AFP.

"The ceiling, a lot was damaged, wirings were exposed. They are all repaired and deep cleaning has been done."

"The main reason for having the India Open at this venue was to see what we needed to do, and we achieved its objective," Supramaniam added.

Agence France-Presse