

# The Asian Reporter

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Koreans hold reunions across the DMZ

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Lasers may ease pain for 'napalm girl'

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## Cultural sharing trumps sports at World Indigenous Games



**INDIGENOUS OLYMPICS.** A Matis indigenous man from Brazil watches a soccer game at the World Indigenous Games in Palmas, Brazil, last month. Billed as the indigenous Olympics, supersized Maori from New Zealand, diminutive Aeta from the Philippines, and native peoples of all shapes and sizes in between tested their mettle at the first event, a chaotic, kaleidoscopic celebration of first peoples from around the globe. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

By Jenny Barchfield  
The Associated Press

**P**ALMAS, Brazil — Supersized Maori from New Zealand, diminutive Aeta from the Philippines, and native peoples of all shapes and sizes in between tested their mettle at the first World Indigenous Games, a chaotic, kaleidoscopic celebration of first peoples from around the globe.

Organizers billed the nine-day event as a sort of indigenous Olympics.

But for many of the nearly 2,000 participants from some 20 countries who converged on host city Palmas, a remote

agricultural outpost in Brazil's scorched heartland, the sports themselves took a back seat to what they said really mattered — cross-cultural sharing and learning.

"This restores your faith in humanity," said Lamarr Oksasikewiyin, a 46-year-old schoolteacher from the Nehiyaw people of Canada's Saskatchewan province, as he followed round one of the spear-throwing competition. "An elder once told me that our culture will save us. I think this is what he meant."

Despite the obvious differences between participants — Brazil's Tapirape wore only body paint and tiny loincloths while the sole Russian delegate was covered in

Siberian furs in defiance of the sweltering tropical heat — the commonalities that unite indigenous people from around the globe were palpable, Oksasikewiyin said. From Ethiopia to Ecuador, first peoples worldwide are still reeling from the lingering effects of colonialism and fighting to preserve their cultures and lands, he said.

"We see we're all in the same boat," he shouted over the roar of spectators, who cheered a particularly impressive spear toss. "Being here, all together, it becomes so clear."

The event arrived one year after Brazil played host to soccer's World Cup and

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