



ATHLETICS

Roslinda calls it a day

FORMER Asian champion pole vaulter Roslinda Samsu has called time on her athletic career to pursue a new chapter in her life though she will not be leaving the sport entirely.

Roslinda, 30, notified the Malaysian Athletic Union (MAU) of her intention to focus on a teaching and coaching career and leave behind a sport which she has much to thank.

Her maiden Olympic appearance in Beijing in 2008 ranks as one of the highlights of her career alongside winning silver at the 2006 Doha Asian Games and four consecutive Sea Games gold medals.

"It's not a decision I've made lightly as I've thought hard about it ever since my last competition in July last year," said Kedah-born Roslinda yesterday.

"I have finally finished my studies which had been interrupted for a long while due to training and competition. I think it is only fair that I give my notice now rather than start training and then only to suddenly stop after receiving my posting."

Roslinda, who graduated from Universiti Putra Malaysia with a degree in physical education last October, will be attached to the Education Ministry and is awaiting her next posting.

"I don't know yet where I will be but I won't be abandoning athletics. I will be coaching young athletes wherever I am posted and hope to contribute to developing the sport in the country by

unearthing young talent.

"This sport has given me so much and competing at the Olympics was one of my best experiences. I also have fond memories of winning an Asian Games silver medal and four Sea Games gold medals," said Roslinda, who also won the Asian Track and Field (ATF) Championship title in Amman, Jordan in 2007, albeit against a weak field.

Roslinda, who still holds the national record of 4.40m set in 2006, also claimed an ATF bronze in 2005 and narrowly missed out on a medal at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games, finishing fourth on countback.

Her retirement will come as a major blow to MAU's hopes of winning nine gold medals at the Myanmar Sea Games as without Roslinda, they can kiss the pole vault gold medal goodbye.

"My body has said enough though my heart wants me to go on. But I have to listen to what my body is telling me and I don't think I can go on," added Roslinda in ruling out a swansong fifth Sea Games gold medal in Myanmar.

One of the few athletes who dared to challenge MAU during the troubled reign of president Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim and a frequent torch-bearer for Malaysian athletics, Roslinda's presence on the track and field will be greatly missed. **By Devinder Singh**

Roslinda Samsu wants to focus on teaching and coaching.