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Modest target for

But fencers will take a stab at creating upsets

By NG WEI LOON
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THE Selangor Amateur Fencing Association (SAFA) have set a modest target for the Malaysia Games (Sukma) to be held in Terengganu from tomorrow to June 9. SAFA secretary Vivien Chen Wei

Wen said they were aiming to bag one gold, two silver and three bronze medals at the upcoming biennial Games.

"We have to be realistic; we don't want to be over-ambitious and expect something beyond our strength. However, we still fancy our chances to create upsets," she added.

At the previous Games held in Kedah two years ago, Selangor finished as overall runners-up behind Johor, with a haul of four gold, two silver and six bronze medals in the fencing competition.

For the upcoming Games, national men's epee exponent Joshua Koh I-jie will lead the Selangor challenge for



Greenhorns: Six of the nine women fencers will be making their debut at Sukma.

Selangor



Aiming for a perfect swansong: Timothy (right) having a word with teammate Al-Imran Sharol Lail.



Setting a realistic target: The Selangor fencers in action during their training session.

the top spot on the podium.

Joshua's brother Timothy Koh I-Wei predicts his younger brother will be the hot favourite to retain his gold medal in the individual event.

"Joshua is training with the national team at Bukit Jalil. He is in good form. In April, he took part in three international competitions, including the World Junior and Cadet meet in Italy. In two consecutive meets held in Bangkok, he finished fourth in the Pre-Olympics qualifier and took the ninth spot in the Asian Fencing Championships," said Timothy, who is also the team's assistant captain.

Selangor captain Mohd Radhi Hasim will also be out to defend his title in the men's sabre.

In the women's side, six of the nine fencers will be making their debut at the biennial Games.

The newcomers are Nur Amalina Tukiman, Vivien Chen Wei Wen, Teo Wen Jing, Syakira Anis Sabrudin, Wong Jyn Ling and Ashlea Low Vonn Xiann.

"Although we are the defending champions in the women's epee and sabre team events, our women's

»We will be among the medal contenders in all three disciplines (foil, epee and sabre) in the women's section«

VIVIEN CHEN WEI WEN

exponents will start as underdogs. We are wary of the threat from Negri Sembilan in the women's sabre while Johor and Kuala Lumpur are the frontrunners in the women's epee. But, we will be among the medal contenders in all three disciplines (foil, epee and sabre) in the women's section," said Chen.

Amalina, from SMK Seksyen 9 in

Shah Alam, is the youngest female in the pack to feature in her first appearance at the Games.

The 15-year-old lass said she wanted to play her role in helping the Selangor side to capture at least a medal in the women's foil team event.

"It will be a learning curve to cross swords with the more established junior exponents from other states. I will try to give my best. We are training six times a week in the final phase of preparation for the Games," said Amalina, who was eliminated in the last 16 in this season's Selangor Open.

In the men's section, Selangor are also exposing four rookies in their line-up. They are Al-Imran Sharol Lail, Shazamin Shahrani, Mohd Rahmat Mohd Nor and Mohd Amri Azmi.

The 15-year-old Amir, also from SMK Seksyen 9, Shah Alam, had to fight his way to earn his place in the team.

"I did not expect the call-up. Before we checked into the Selangor contingent three-day camp held at Universiti Putra Malaysia recently, I had to battle against my close friend

(Muhd Khair Abdul Halim) for a place in the men's sabre team. I am excited to be representing the state in Sukma," said Amir.

In contrast, seasoned campaigner Timothy is eyeing a perfect swansong. The 20-year-old foil exponent hopes to advance to the final in the men's individual event.

"This will be my third and final outing at Sukma. I finished among the top 16 fencers in 2004. Two years ago, I picked up a bronze medal in Kedah. This time, I want to go one better and qualify for the final.

"I am aware that the fencers from Johor and Sabah will provide stiff challenges. It is going to be tight and it is hard to predict the outcome - anything can happen. But, I have beaten them before. I need to be at my best to reproduce the winning touches to defeat them," said Timothy, who aspires to pursue studies in mechanical engineering.

The Selangor fencers left for the Games yesterday for the competition scheduled to be held at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) in Kuala Terengganu from June 1 to 6.

THE SQUAD

Team manager: Mohd Mujib Said
Coach: Svetlana Vladimirovna
Chaperon: Lim Chwee Ling

Women's

- **Foil:** Norliyana Noor Aliff, Sarah Najihah Ahmad Ridzuan, Nur Amalina Tukiman
 - **Epee:** Vivien Chen Wei Wen, Lee Yue Xin, Teo Wen Jing
 - **Sabre:** Syakira Anis Sabrudin, Wong Jyn Ling, Ashlea Low Vonn Xiann

Men's

- **Foil:** Timothy Koh I-Wei, Al-Imran Sharol Lail, Wong Chee Hung
 - **Epee:** Joshua Koh I-Jie, Hasmie Sobaini, Shazamin Shahrani
 - **Sabre:** Mohd Radhi Hasim, Mohd Rahmat Mohd Nor, Mohd Amri Azmi