

# Zaidatul's done it this time!

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Shanti: Set the record in 1993.

## She breaks Shanti's 24-year-old national women's 100m mark

By AFTAR SINGH

**KUALA LUMPUR:** This time it's for real!

Pint-sized Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli has finally broken the 24-year-old national women's 100m record.

The 23-year-old Penang sprinter clocked 11.45 seconds to finish second behind homester Tamzin Thomas (11.44) in race two of the blue riband event in the ASA Speed Series Two at the Mangaung Athletics Stadium in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on Wednesday.

Zaidatul's effort shattered the previous national mark of 11.50 set by G. Shanti in the pre-SEA Games trials at the Merdeka Stadium in 1993.

Zaidatul had clocked an even better time – 11.35 – in the second heats in the AGN League 7 in Pretoria on March 4. But it wasn't recognised as it was wind-assisted.

Zaidatul, who left to Pretoria last month for a two-month training-cum competition stint, was thrilled to bits.

"I knew I would be able to break the national record after doing a personal best of 11.35 last week," said Zaidatul in a telephone conversation from Bloemfontein.

"This is the best moment of my athletics career. I wasn't even born yet when Shanti broke the national record.

"And now I have achieved what I've always wanted ... break the national record and become the fastest woman in the country," said Zaidatul, whose next competition is the ASA Speed Series Four in Germiston on March 22.

Zaidatul clocked a poor 12.12 in the Rio de Janeiro Olympics last August. Her previous personal best was 11.62.

Zaidatul's latest time is still way off the SEA Games record of 11.28 set by

Lydia de Vega of the Philippines in the 1987 Jakarta Games.

The Asian Games mark is 11.15 and it was set by Sri Lanka's Jayanthika Susanthika at the 2002 Games in Busan, South Korea.

National chief coach Zainal Abas, who confirmed that it was a new national record, was proud of Zaidatul's achievement.

"She has also set the fastest time in the South-East Asian region this year. We hope she clocks the same time or better in the Kuala Lumpur SEA Games in August and win the gold medal.

"Zaidatul needs to take part in more competitions to make sure she can peak in the SEA Games," said Zainal, who was also happy with the achievements of the other Malaysian athletes in the competition in Bloemfontein.

Three national athletes achieved personal bests in the meet – Muhd Azam Masri (10.22 in men's 100m, old time: 10.55); Shereen Samson Vallabouy (11.90 in women's 100m, old time: 12.12); and S. Komalam Shally (11.72 in women's 100m, old time: 11.76).

Siti Fatimah Mohd equalled her personal best of 11.70 in the women's 100m.

The Malaysian women's 4x100m quartet of Zaidatul, Komalam, Shereen and Nurul Faizal Azma Mazlan clocked 45.71 to finish second to the South African team (45.16).

Their efforts fell short of the national record of 45.32 set by Zaidatul, Komalam, Nuru Faizal and Siti Fatimah in the Singapore Open last year.

The national men's 4x100m team of Khairul Hafiz Jantan, Bandrul Hisyam Abdul Manap, Jonathan Nyepa and Azam Masri clocked 40.38 to finish second in Bloemfontein. The South African team won in 39.03.



### New speed queen:

Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli is now officially Malaysia's fastest woman sprinter after clocking 11.45 seconds in the ASA Speed Series Two athletics competition in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on Wednesday. Her time erases the 11.50 set by G. Shanti in 1993.