

NATIONAL sprinter Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli posted the fastest time ever run by a Malaysian woman in the 100m in Pretoria yesterday to mark herself as one to watch at the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games in August.

Although her time of 11.36 seconds cannot be recognised as a national record due to a tailwind of 2.5 metres per second, Husniah set up the tantalising possibility of a men's and women's 100m golden double at the Sea Games.

Her time was faster than G. Shanti's national record of 11.50 seconds, which has stood since 1993, and comes just eight months after Khairul Hafiz Jantan erased Watson Nyambek's men's 100m record.

Husniah's effort was a marked improvement on her previous best of 11.62s set at the 2014 Asean University Games, making her a medal prospect at the Sea Games.

National chief coach Zainal Abas agreed that Husniah, 23, could end Malaysia's gold medal

Husniah boosts Sea Games hopes

drought in the Sea Games women's sprints since Shanti's 100m-200m double victory in 1997.

"Based on this timing, which still needs to be verified as to the wind reading, it would make Husniah a leading contender at the Sea Games," Zainal told Timesport yesterday before the wind measurement was announced.

"It is by far the best timing by a Malaysian in women's sprinting and Husniah was already in the top three in Southeast Asia last year."

With Khairul also one of the favourites in the men's sprints, Malaysia could see a long drought in both the men's and women's sprints come to an end in August.

No Malaysian has even mount-

ed the podium in the women's 100m since Shanti's 1997 victory while Nazmizan Muhammad was the last Malaysian winner of the men's 100m and 200m in 2003.

Only once — in 1967 — have Malaysians won both the men's and women's 100m at the same edition when Tan Sri Dr M. Jegathesan and Cheryl Doral were successful.

Husniah became the second Malaysian record breaker on successive weekends after Tan Huang Leong set a new national mark in the marathon in Tokyo last Sunday.

The Penang-born sprinter, who also holds the national indoor 60m record, finished second in the race with teammates S. Komalam Shally and Siti Fatima Mo-



Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli clocked 11.36s in South Africa yesterday.

hammad coming in third and fourth respectively.

Husniah also ran at the 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympics on a wildcard entry and is currently

on a two-month training and competition stint in South Africa along with 10 other national athletes in preparation for the Sea Games. **Devinder Singh**